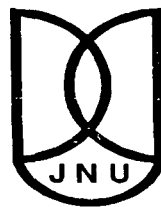


**ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN ALGERIA:  
AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF  
FRONT ISLAMIQUE DU SALUT (FIS)**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of*

**Master of Philosophy**

**SEBASTIAN N.**



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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN ALGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF FRONT ISLAMIQUE DU SALUT (FIS)**" submitted by **SEBASTIAN N.** in partial fulfilment of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M.Phil)** is his original work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this or other university.

The dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated to*

*My Dear Mama and Amma*

## PREFACE

The post September 11 global context, some scholars opine, has ushered in a thematically novel theoretical discourse dealing with conscience other than “West versus the Rest”. The newfound interest emphasizes on Islamic fundamentalism. Perhaps, this is not to disprove what ideologies of the West Samuel Huntington and his ilk say about Islam i.e., that Islam poses the biggest threat after Communism. The bottom line is clear: Islam is fundamentalism and this is no different from terrorism. Thus it become imperative to take a closure look at different ongoing discussions about Islamic revolutions, Islamic fundamentalism and, of course, the concept of democracy in Islam and West.

This study seeks to analyse the rise and growth of Islamic movements in Algeria, focuses on *Islamic Salvation Front*, which is the largest Islamic organization in Algeria. The first chapter is an introductory one, deals with the Islamic movements in North Africa in general and Algeria in particular till the formation of independent Algerian state. It includes various currents of modernist elements in Islam, which influenced the Algerian Islamic movements. The chapter analyses the issues related to colonialism and the development of an anti-colonial movement based on Islamic ideology. Besides, the chapter analyses the religious and political impacts of Islamic reformist movements in Algeria. The role of Islam in Algerian nationalist movement is discussed in this chapter.

The chapter two discusses the role of Islamic identity in the nation/state building after independence and how the state used the Islamic symbols in order to build a single party authoritarian ‘socialist’ state. It is very clear in the case of Algeria that, Islam has been used by state in different context, to get legitimacy for

the regime. One of the most important points analysed in this chapter is that how and why official Islam is being challenged by Islamists. This is also been discussed in this chapter that how the legitimacy of state has been questioned due to certain socio-economic developments. Besides, it is seen that by the end of 1980s there developed an anti-establishment insurgence, which strengthened and finally changed the entire administrative/political structure of the state. It is an important point discussed in this chapter as to how Islamic political movements could capitalize the situation in the first phase of anti-establishment developments and how it assumed a fundamentalist dimension in the second phase. The entire discussion is more or less related to the relationship of state and Islam, especially the question of legitimacy to the regime.

The third chapter discusses the different schools of thought in the Islamic movements in Algeria. The chapter focuses on the ideological orientation of the organization. The socio-economic and political programme of FIS is the major theme of discussion in this chapter. It is seen that the influence of Islam in the formation of the political programme of FIS is very critical. The contradiction between the programme and the realities is very important in this regard. The ideological differences among various groups in FIS and its impact on the political development in Algeria are analysed.

One of the themes discussed in the IV<sup>th</sup> chapter is the development of political liberalization/democratisation process in Algeria in the 1980s. Some theoretical aspects of Islam and democracy have been discussed in this chapter. Clearly, there are various controversial arguments regarding the place of democracy in Islam. This chapter tries to analyse some major aspects related to the possibilities of democratisation/nature of democracy in a so-called Islamic state, especially in the

context of the experiments in Algeria. The role of army in Algerian politics from the commencement of liberalization and democratisation process is another important subject that is discussed in this chapter. The fifth chapter is the Conclusion.

This dissertation has been materialized with the co-operation, help, and encouragement of many people. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Anwar Alam, under whose guidance I have completed this work. I express my gratitude to the members of faculty for their suggestions and constructive criticism at various stages of this work.

I am deeply indebted to my friends Titto and Happy for their constant help and support to complete this dissertation. A word of thanks goes to Sudhakaran, Suhail, Santhosh, Sugato, Reji, Sudhakaran, Surjeet, Hussain and my classmates and other friends for their sincere co-operation to complete this work.



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# CHAPTER I

## ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN ALGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

Islamic movements emerged as a major political force in Algeria as part of the awakening of the Arab Muslim Consciousness in the Middle East and North Africa during the period between the two world wars. But, Islam had the role of a unifying force since French colonized the country in 1830s. The earlier uprisings against the French - 1849 to 1879 were mainly due to various socio-economic and religious reasons. Once the authority was established, the French started the policy of suppression through various repressive and discriminatory laws. The Muslims in Algeria were considered as second-class citizens and their movements were strictly controlled and heavy penalties were imposed on political activists under colonial rule.

During the course of time, Islamic movements have grown to the extent of challenging power structure in various states. According to this movement, Islam is not merely a religion but a political ideology that should be integrated into all aspects of society. As happened in the case of other Arab countries, in Algeria also Islam functioned as a unifying force since the colonization of the country. Later it has become the most potential ideology that could influence the politics of state. Different groups, both Islamic fundamentalists and western scholars, have projected it as an alternative to communism and to fight against western/liberal democracy. The *Salafiyya* movement in 1930s had aimed to create a national identity based on Islam throughout the region. This identity played an important role in the independence movements in the Arab world especially in the Algeria war of independence, due to its popular and violent nature of functioning. Moreover, this



domination of Islamic identity was the major reason for the incorporation of Islam in 1962 by the state. The nationalist movement of Algeria was a complex-whole of different currents of political thought within the Islam/Islamic movements. The fundamental question is that how this spirit of Islam functioned in Algeria in different phases of national development in different ways.

Islamic ideals, symbols and institutions offered powerful instruments of inspiration and mobilization for those who challenged the French domination in Algeria from the beginning. Dozens of charismatic leaders emerged on the basis of ethnic brotherhood or regional allegiances in different parts of North Africa and led movements of reform resistance and revolution to free the homeland from the hands of nonbelievers. They tried to project the anti colonial struggle as one between believers and nonbelievers - Muslims and Europeans<sup>1</sup>.

For Salafists, the *Ummah* of the Prophet was the model of how a Muslim community should be governed. For them *Shariah* was an inflexible body of law where there was little scope for any revision or updating<sup>2</sup>. Most of the secular nationalist movements in Islamic world used Islamic terms and Islamic ideological platforms to put forth their arguments. This happened because radically influenced daily lives of the people, their concept of government and nationality. Therefore it was but natural that Islam was bound to be incorporated into their concepts/ideas on nationalism and all kinds of political change<sup>3</sup>. For the new thinkers, *Shariah* was an inflexible body of law because of the belief that since God is perfect there cannot be any mistake in what he revealed - i.e., Quran<sup>4</sup>. However, the interpretation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Abdelbaki, Hermasi "The Political and the Religious in the Modern History of the Maghreb" in John Ruedy (ed.), *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, (Washington, 1994) p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Field, *Inside the Arab World*, (London, 1994), p.231.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 231.

Quran in the changed situation underwent certain amount of transformation when rulers issued certain decrees especially on commerce, taxation and public & criminal Law as a supplementary to *Shariah* for the smooth running of the administration. The *Ulama* who helped and supported the ruler compelled to follow the interest of the ruler due to this reason. This process assured in a defacto separation of religion and politics to some extent. But the rulers have always used the symbolic value of Islam, which was deeply rooted in the Islamic society. Non-separation of religious, legal and political sphere is further affirmed in the Islamic political thought. Islam has been a political religion since its origin. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad were clearly against the interests of the ruling class of Mecca. This led him to fight a war with the establishment, which he finally won and set up a religious community called *Ummah*<sup>5</sup>. In these circumstances the Prophet became a political and religious leader. The state in Medina, which was ruled by the Prophet, is considered as the first Islamic state. According to this, *Shariah* should be the sole source of law as well as the norm for individual behavior - for the believers and the sovereign<sup>6</sup>. The state cannot and never be considered in terms of territory bound nation state. The social structure during the time of the Prophet was important due to the absence of clergy and institutions with specialized functions. There was no distinction made between religious and political orders in that society because the Prophet was the sole narrator and interpreter of a divine supreme law that controlled all human interactions. Though the situation was changed after Prophet during the early centuries of *Higra*, the *sultan/sovereign* was bound with a clear religious function

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<sup>5</sup> John. L Esposito, "The Rise of Political Islam: Factors and Issues"  
[www.djoo.freeseerve.co.uk/does/fundamentalism](http://www.djoo.freeseerve.co.uk/does/fundamentalism). December 1998, p.5.

<sup>6</sup> Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, (Cambridge, 1994), p.13.

that to defend the Islam and *Shariah*<sup>7</sup>. Gradually the institution of Sultan/Amir had become the authority with political power and Caliph had become the sole and legitimate authority of religious power.

### **Islam and the Origin of Nationalism in Algeria**

The resurgence and revivalism in Islam however is directly related to the western influence in the Islamic world and its socio cultural impacts. The collapse of Ottoman Empire was a turning point in this regard. For the last thirteen centuries, since the advent of Islam, the entire debate on the rule in the Islamic world was conducted within the framework of *Shariah*. In most of the Arab countries ruled according to the tenets of *Shariah*. The opponents of the rulers used the same Islamic law to criticize the government and this tendency continued even after 1870s despite the spread of some secular nationalist ideas in the politics of Muslim world.

Algerian Muslims were the subjects of France who were governed by Muslim personal law. The Ottoman Turkish Empire had been ruling Algeria/Algiers before France occupied Algiers on 5 July 1830. The Ottoman resistance in the surrounding of Algiers was collapsed within months at the Turkish outposts. But the resistance continued in the outskirts of the city. The French failed to form a central authority and administration in Algeria. The situation helped the tribal chiefs to increase their power and prestige and to become alternative power centers. Though the French appointed a Governor General in 1834 in Algeria, they couldn't consolidate the power for around one decade. Anyhow the French rule had been consolidated by 1841. But still the powerful resistance continued in the western part

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 14.

of the state. Abd al Qadir, the most powerful tribal leader was at the top of this resistance against French colonialism<sup>8</sup>. He declared a war on French in 1839.

Neither the movement of Abd al Qadir was not merely a political one nor his opposition was merely tribal. It is true that the nature and functioning of this movement was more Islamic than political or tribal. As a matter of fact, Abd al Qadir's movement was the predecessor of all the subsequent Islamic movements in Algeria - both in colonial period and afterwards. He laid a strong foundation to the Islamic political discourse in Algeria in a modern context within which the resistance against colonialism and the formation of Islamic state assume prominence. Abd al Qadir and his supporters considered the setting up of an Islamic political system in which Qadir was the *imam* who had received the consent of the faithful and whose duty was to uphold the faith and protect the people of Islam<sup>9</sup>. The entire structure and function of the rule established by Qadir may be considered as a parallel to Prophet Muhammad's foundation of the Islamic polity. He accepted the title '*Nasirad - Din - The Champion of Religion*'<sup>10</sup>

It may be noticed that the ideological differences within the Islamic resistance to colonialism started in Algeria during the same period of Abd al Qadir. In 1838, one rebel leader called Muhammad Ibn Abdulla, who had claimed to be descendant of Abd al- Qadir - Jilani, the founder of *Qadriyya* brotherhood, challenged the authority of Abd al Qadir both politically and religiously. His main criticism against Abd al Qadir was that the latter was powerless to save the Muslim from Europeans. Though Abd al Qadir succeeds to crush the opposition, there were tremendous attempts to question his legitimacy as an Islamic ruler - the point of

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<sup>8</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Islam in the Modern World*, (London, 1980), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p.5.

objection was his authority as a religious leader or *Imam*. Most of these opposition groups were traditional in their ideological outlook. Such similar movements and leaders were there in existence different parts of North Africa and they were popularly called *Mahdi*. But the ongoing movement against French colonial rule characterized the peculiar situation in Algeria.

The resistance of Abd al Qadir against the French rule was ultimately defeated in 1847 by General Bugeaud. The entire Algeria had gone under the direct French rule. There had been numerous uprisings against the French rule mainly because of the confiscation of land and religious oppression. Anyhow, the western expansion in Algeria was completed by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The same period also witnessed the emergence of a new school of thought in Islam. The resistance against colonialism from the very beginning was more or less depended on the question of Islamic identity. A systemic process of political, economic, cultural and demographic expansion raised questions about crucial cultural factors - especially Islam - in shaping the proactive and reactive decisions made by Algerians as they faced new challenges by French colonialism<sup>11</sup>. The religious policy of French administration played an important role in the whole process of anti-colonial development. French had attacked and closed down Mosques as well as the *Madrassas*<sup>12</sup>. Religious properties were confiscated, religious institutions were taken over and *Ulamas* were appointed and dismissed by French colonial authorities. All these policies considerably weakened and undermined the legitimacy of both traditional institutions - religious and political. It forced upon Algerians, a new language culture and a set of institutions - all foreign - in the name of civilization.

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<sup>11</sup> Hugh Roberts, "Doctrine of Economic and Political Opportunism in the Strategy of Algerian Islamism" in John Ruedy (ed), n.1, pp.124-125.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Jane Decb, "Islam and the State in Algeria and Morocco: A Dialectical Model" in John Ruedy, n.1, p. 281.

The colonial strategy proved detrimental to the existing traditional *sufi* domination, but it ignited the tendency of religious modernism which came into effect by Islamist modernist thinkers, Jamaluddin Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. In the changed situation reformist could easily undermine the credibility of existing order. The arrival of Muhammad Abduh to Algeria in 1903 gave an impetus to the Algerian religio - political sphere.

But one of the interesting aspects of this resistance was that the difference in the strategy followed by each group. Groups that appear socially or culturally similar responded in radically different ways to the common challenges. In addition, the policies of the same group toward an on going threat also varied overtime. It is seen that Abd al Qadir alternatively negotiated with and fought with the French regime. As a result of this, Islam became an insufficient explanation for a particular course of action to the new challenges created by colonialism.

The influence of Sufism started in Algeria many centuries before colonial invasion. It played an important role since eleventh century AD in the social and political life of Algerians. It is very important that it had laid the foundation of Algerian nationalism. The Sufi order created a new sense of Islamism/religious unity among Algerians, which ultimately functions as a force against colonialism. Religious brotherhoods were the main source of resistance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were frequent armed uprisings against the central power and Sufi orders, which were most evident in the religious and social spheres. It is important to note that in a predominantly rural society where collective tribal organ was still intact, armed action by the religious orders presented an effective opposition to the colonial

occupation<sup>13</sup>. Brotherhood basically attempted to deny the authority of government and perhaps to overthrow it but not to replace it<sup>14</sup>.

### **The Salafiyya Reform Movement and its Impact on Algeria**

The Islamist current, a tendency before it developed in to a movement and organised in parties can be traced back to the first part of twentieth century. It is impossible to separate Islamist movements and national movements in the Algerian context. Both these movements combined religious renewal, moral reform and nationalism. *Salafism* was the major influential force and theoretical foundation of all Islamic movements in Algeria. Jamaluddin Afghani and Muhammad Abduh elaborated a comprehensive theory of Islamic modernism in Egypt during the period of 1870s and 1880s. Salafis emphasized the concept of Islam as a unifying force and an ethnic marker. The overcoming of the parochial identification and the creation of a broader Islamic identity was an essential outcome of the new situation created by colonialism. There was a sharp break with inept forum of official Islam by the new thinkers in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The issue regarding the new thinking put forward by Jamaluddin Afghani (pan Islamism) and Muhammad Abdhu (Islamic nationalism) was whether their endeavors represented a revival of genuine Islam or a subtle manipulation of concepts designed to make western institutions and values acceptable by presenting them Islamic origin<sup>15</sup>. Whatever be the orientation both challenged colonialism that helped the growth of Algerian nationalism. *Shariah* was that the Quran should be reread by each generation according to the progress and dynamics of society and reaches its own consensus and use its logical facilities to

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> Alan R Taylor, *Islamic Question in the Middle East Politics*, (London, 1998) p.115.

change the law and make it relevant<sup>16</sup>. It was this considerable change in the Islamic thinking that took Islamic movements including the Algerian nationalist movements to the modern period of colonialism and helped to assert the essence of political, cultural and geographical changes which has to redrawn the map of Arab world in a specific historic period - early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is seen that in certain aspects, reformist were trying to reconcile the Islamic law with western culture<sup>17</sup>. The major drawback of this was that Islamic modernism remained in theoretical level. It had no relevance in terms of resolving the immediate problems of internal dysfunction and external intervention. Though the new wave of thinking in Islam had generated an interest in change and reform in Arab world, it failed to create a political impact in a significant way. Despite the favorable reputation of people like Muhammad Abdhu and Jamaluddin Afghani, their reform doctrine and intellectualism could not win a broad populist backing against colonialism. In Algeria, nationalist movement succeeded to consolidate this popular support in its operational level.

The root of *Salafism* goes back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Islamic thinker Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya who declared permissible war against Muslim rulers who were not ready to impliment *Shariah*<sup>18</sup>. Algerian *Salafism* is also holding its roots in the works of Ibn Taymiyya. *Salafiyya* movement was basically a protestant movement against the reactionary position of *Ulama* who engaged in magical and superstitious practices. The Islamic modernist idea in the early phase was to evaluate the existing institutions and seeking an appropriate and effective revision of them from an intellectual Islamic perspective<sup>19</sup>. This was very much relevant in the colonial context of Algeria because of the link between colonial rulers and traditional *Ulama*

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Heykal, "Radical Salafism" *The Hindu* (Delhi) December 1, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, n.15, p. 45.



both function as institutions to support each other. The intellectual forefathers of *Salafiyya* movement were devoted to an unrestricted reexamination of Islamic tradition in quest of solutions to contemporary problems. The association of Algerian *Ulama* lead by Abd al Hamid Ben Badis was the manifestation of the increasing influence of *Salafism* in the Algerian religious sphere.

The major question of difference of *Salafis* with the traditional *Ulama* was the issue of interpretation of Quran. *Salafis* defend the Muslim world by reactivating the philosophical and scientific traditions of the Islamic legacy. At the same time they do abhor all innovations in belief and practice. For them innovations are delegitimizing Islamic law, *Shariah*<sup>20</sup>. The doctrine of infidelity and scepticism was a major ideological shift in the Islamic thinking. They had gone to the extent that in the absence of suitable candidate and the *Ulama* versed in the modern sciences, the best alternative was an Islamic state ruled by an enlightened elite in consultation with the people, and able to interpret the *Sharia* and legislate when necessary<sup>21</sup>. It has to be understood in a colonial context, which encourages science and technology and western education. Such an ideological shift was possible in Islam by way of challenging the idea of traditional *Ulama* that no self-interpretation is allowed in Quran. In Algeria, the *Salafi* thinkers, who strengthened this argument, were non-*Ulama* intellectuals. They were looking back to pristine Islam, the Islam during the time of Prophet, seeking above all to maintain cultural integrity of the Arab society<sup>22</sup>.

The reformist tendency in Islamic world was started by the direct criticism of the tradition of Sufism, religious practices, superstitions and deviations. This also

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<sup>20</sup> Ruthven Malise, "Islamic Movements in Middle East and North Africa" *Europa 2002*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Halim Berkat, (ed.) *Contemporary North Africa: Issues of Development and Integration*, (London, 1985), pp. 158-159.

challenge the status-quo based on colonial structure. The reformist addressed the problem of backwardness of Muslim world and proposed a solution that is to return to the tradition of first *Ummah*. The major course of action was proposed were the rejection of common law and maraboutism and the rapprochement with other religions<sup>23</sup>. Their reform was actually not against adoption of modernity, but returning to the tradition of the Prophet, which would enable the conceptualization of modernity<sup>24</sup>. The major idea of modernists was the right to individual interpretation of the founding texts, which has given more freedom to interpret in nationalist way. The aim of such revolutionary step was to destroy the monopoly of *Ulama* in the religious sphere. Though they argued for such fundamental change, they were less interested in political aspects as such. However, politically, maraboutic Islam tolerated the colonial authorities and thus the reformism was against both religious and political order. *Salafists* believed that the only role of state is to apply *Shariah*<sup>25</sup>. Because there was a close link existed between religious and political order the reformism could make some impacts on politics.

Though new waves of reformist thinking developed in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, this gained a definite organizational structure after many decades, in 1930s. The reason of this is that the specific historic situation which developed after the First World War. The impact of First World War in the Arab religio- political sphere and the collapse of Ottoman Caliphate created a new wave of religious reformism in the Arab world. These movements took their ideas from *Salafiyya* concept of using early Islam as the model for reform. But they broke with the intellectual elitist approach of Muhammad Abdhu and other *Salafists*. Preaching an

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<sup>23</sup> Roy, n.6, p.32.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*.

Islamic populism they took this doctrine to the street and actively sought a revolutionary following among the masses<sup>26</sup>.

The most important characteristic of the Islamic reformism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was that it was more nationalistic in its orientation. Moreover, it was clearly political and anti-colonial even though it was under religious banner. The founding fathers of *Salafism* were less concern about politics than the introduction of *Shariah*. The major attempt of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of Muslim Brotherhood, was to analyse the reason for the decline of Islam in Arab world in general and North Africa in particular. The major programme proposed by him was to reclaim a self-respecting mode of life to those multitudes that had been banished to the margin of society and become spiritually disoriented through the ravages of westernization and western forms of economic enterprise<sup>27</sup>. The intellectual base of this movement was *Salafism*, which aimed at the reestablishment of original pure Islamic order to purify the society and changing the political and constitutional arrangements, which were based on colonial ideology. This was the beginning of the transformation of an Arab from a pious Muslim to a proud nationalist. Most important aspect of this movement was that, Islam was defined as a political system in keeping with the major ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>28</sup>. Since it was integrated to politics, it resulted in the spreading of Islam to political scene in Algeria and other Arab countries.

It may be noted that Hassan al-Banna admired the principles of western democracy to replacing the existing state of disorder with a regenerative “Islamic Order” *al-Nizam al-Islami*.<sup>29</sup> According to al Banna the major tasks of an Islamic polity were, (a) the Quran should be the basis of law, (b) government should

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<sup>26</sup> Taylor, n.15, p.46.

<sup>27</sup> Kcdouric, n.8, p.56.

<sup>28</sup> Roy, n.6, pp.36-37.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, n.15, p.54.

function by consultation and (c) the rulers should be considered leaders bound by Islamic percepts and popular will<sup>30</sup>. When he supported the parliamentary democracy in principle, he rejected institutions and models existing as a part of democratic order. For al Banna, the ultimate loyalty of a Muslim must be to the Islamic *Ummah*. al Banna says, “ Some people think of us a group of preachers, concerned only to call people to do virtues and abstain from gains. Others believe it is a mystical trend. We are not any of those. We call to return for true Islam which is a belief and an application, a home and a nationality, a religion and state, a spirit and body a Quran and sword<sup>31</sup>”. This message is indicative of the increasing role of political activism in the name of Islam. All this boosted the nationalist tendency and strengthened the struggle against colonialism. Here Islam provides an alternative to existing social order in the Arab world, which is dominated by colonialism, to achieve renaissance, power and dignity. Their ideas were general and holistic such as ‘God is the highest end, Prophet is the leader, Quran is the law, Jihad is the means and death for the cause of God is the highest ambition<sup>32</sup>’. Different from *Sufism* and *Salafism*, Muslim Brotherhood was more political and action oriented.

Sayyid Qutb and Abdul Mawdudi were the other two prominent reformists in the Islamic world who are considered with al Banna as the forefathers of modern Islamic movements. Sayyid Qutb who elaborated the ideas of al Banna has a special place in Algerian context. According to Sayyid Qutb, the only way Muslim could recover their self-respect and protect them from exploitation was to develop an Islamic ideology and build the political systems on it<sup>33</sup>. He injected more pronounced militancy into the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood than is evident

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> Hassan al Banna, *Message to the Fifth Conference of Muslim Brotherhood*, (Cairo, 1938).

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor, n.15, p.57.

in the doctrines of Hassan al Banna. Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi converted Islamism into a challenging opposition to the status quo. Qutb observed that the aim of *jihad* is to secure complete freedom for everyman throughout the world by releasing him from servitude to other human beings so that he may serve God<sup>34</sup>. Qutb considered all the existing Islamic societies as *Jahiliyya* but he rejected the use of western theories and practices for that reconstruction. As far as the doctrine of nationalism is concerned, Qutb totally rejected any such idea, which stands beyond the teachings of Islam. For Sayyid Qutb 'the home land of Muslim is not a piece of land, the nationality of Muslim is not a nationality determined by government. The family of the Muslim is not blood relationship. The flag of the Muslim is not the flag of the country'<sup>35</sup>. While Abduh and Afghani considered western ideas and structures as the weapons of modernization, al Banna virtually rejected that and declared war against all kinds of western institutions including religion and state. Instead he was anxious to prove that west is indebted to Islam for many of its intellectual accomplishments including to the extent of the Islamic origin of western science<sup>36</sup>.

*Ulama* and Muslim Brotherhood mainly differed on issues relating to the political revolution, *Shariah* and the status of women in Islam. The new movements believed that the society would be islamised only through social and political action. They argued that only when the society become Islamic in its foundation and structure, it will be an Islamic society<sup>37</sup>. Some Islamic reformists argued that nationalism in the Arab world is a western creation, which helped the westerners to

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p. 57.

<sup>37</sup> Roy, n.6, p.36.

dominate over Islam and to divide the Arab world<sup>38</sup>. But this argument is baseless because it is clear that in the case of Arab world that nationalism – whether it was secular or Islamic – was necessarily a reaction against cultural and political domination of west over the Arab world. This is very much evident in the Algerian nationalism.

### **Role of Islamic Movements in Algerian Nationalism**

The colonial consolidation led to new social formation and cultural struggles in Algeria. Algerian Islamist movement has deep roots in the society. From the period of French invasion in 1830s, Islam provided a refuge of collective identity for Algerians and Islamic sentiment was a constant source of anti-colonial resistance.<sup>39</sup> The creation of new political and cultural institutions and the total reshaping of society formed a situation in Algeria where Islamic identity could play an important role<sup>40</sup>. From 1871 to 1919, the French followed highly discriminatory policies against Muslims in Algeria. Algerians were discriminated in education and imposed special religious taxes. On the other hand, in order to prevent the uprisings, French rule incorporated and subordinated *Ulama* by making them government officials<sup>41</sup>.

The visit of Egyptian Islamist reformer Muhammad Abdhu to Algeria in 1903 assured in a new era of Islamic discourse in Algeria. The reformers in Algeria, Abd al Halim Bensmaria and Kemal Muhammad Ben Mustafa called Muslims to return to a stricter code of Islam and leave the traditional *tariqas* based on the

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<sup>38</sup> Taylor, n. 15, p.60.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Mortimer, "Islam and Multiparty politics in Algeria" *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol.45, no.4, p.575.

<sup>40</sup> Donald C. Holisinger, "Islam and State Expansion in Algeria" in John Ruedy, n.1, pp. 4-6.

<sup>41</sup> Loise E Aroisan, and Richad P Mitchel (eds.) *Modern Middle East and North Africa*, (New York, 1984), p. 138.

superstitions and erroneous beliefs<sup>42</sup>. The culmination of the reformist movement in Algeria was the formation of *Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama* in 1931, by Abd al Hamid Ben Badis. Though only a religious and cultural association, Algerian Muslim *Ulama* played an important political role till 1956. It presented Islam as the national ideology of Algerian people, which was the sole force capable of unifying all sectors of society. They were the advocates of linguistic nationalism because their position was that political nationalism would lead to divisions and conflicts within the community. Ben Badis was very much influenced by the thoughts of Muhammad Abdhu and the activities of Shaikh Arslan. Ben Badis was working himself since 1913 in Algeria to mobilize Islamists against colonialism. He advocated an Islamic revival to increase national pride and to emancipate the country. As a harbinger to the formation of the organization he started a periodical – *Al Mundaquid* (The Critic). Through this magazine he preached against Sufi orders that he regarded as corruptors of Islam. In addition to this, he stressed the importance of Arabic and decried the seizure of *habus* (Waqf) lands by the French. One of his close associates, Ahammad Tawfiq al-Madani, who was a charter member of the association appealed to his readers that to adopt in word and deed the slogan ‘Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language and Algeria is our fatherland’. The movement focused on the establishment of independent Arabic schools and adult education centers to promote an Islamic social system and an Islamic community. The religious nationalist position of Ben Badis which functioned as the crux of the association was that ‘the Algerian Muslim nation is not France, it is not possible that it be France, it does not want to become France and even if it wished it

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<sup>42</sup> John Ruedy, n.1, p.282.

could not be France<sup>43</sup>. Algeria has its own tradition, customs, culture, religion and linguistic unity, which is no way similar to colonial French culture and traditions.

Ben Badis writes, “We, for our part, have searched through the pages of history and we have also examined the present. We have come the conclusion that the Algerian nation was formed and does exist as all other nations on earth was formed and do exist. Moreover, this nation has its history defined by innumerable great events; it has its linguistic and religious unity, its own culture, its traditions and customs both good and bad, as do all other nations. Algerian Muslim nation is not France”.<sup>44</sup>

The position of *Jam'at Ulama* in the national question was ambiguous because when they opposed assimilation of Algerian Muslims, they did not demand independence from France. The reason behind such a position was that the association was a socially conservative force and drew support from traditional middle class that had enjoyed close ties with the colonial administration. When the *ulema* started making links with established participants in the nationalist movements, the colonial administration started controlling their activities.

North African Star (*Etoile Nord Africaine*-ENA), the organisation of the emigrant workers, was the predecessor of the Algerians people's party (PPA) and Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD) maintained an Arabo-Muslim orientation of Algerian nationalism. ENA was the first exclusively Algerian Muslim political party. PPA, the organisation that was formed in 1937 dominated in Muslim politics in Algeria until 1954. They were the major articulator of the

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<sup>43</sup> John Ruedy, “Continuities and Discontinuities in the Algerian Confrontation with Europe” in John Ruedy , n.1, p.76.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*



Islamist–populist ideology. A crisis in colonial agriculture and the exodus of Muslims from the countryside was the major reason for the rise of PPA and ENA. Algerian Muslims conducted an Islamic conference in 1936 and they demanded equity with Frenchmen and the abolition of a separate administration. This was the first coordinated effort of the Muslim social and political process. Although they raised some political demands, their main concerns were non-political, such as family code, marriage and inheritance. They mainly projected the issues related to Arabo-muslim identity. Messali al Hadj, who later found MTLD (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberalization), also participated in this conference. It may be noted that the reformist *Ulama* were changing their position from participating nationalist coalition to cultural/religious revivalism. As parallel to this, there was one nationalist movement in Algeria– Federation of Muslim Councilors – that formed in 1930 by Ferhat Abbas. The issues raised by the organisation were more political in their nature and substance. They submitted a manifesto to colonial authorities in 1947. The major demands were the end of colonization and the declaration of Arabic as the official language. But their attempt to create an autonomous secular Algerian state within the French union failed. This manifesto was summarily rejected and that ultimately weakened the position of the movement.

Ben Badis made a clear distinction between ethnic nationalism and political nationalism (*Jinsiyya Qawniyya and Jinsiyya Siyasiyya*). The ethnic nationalism defines culture, religion and values and the political nationalism is almost external<sup>45</sup>. On the basis of this he argued that the French and the Algerian could beneficially share political nationality so long as each respects the ethnic nationality of the other.

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p. 77.

This demonstrates the stance of the Algerian mainstream reformist that there can be a defacto separation of the religious and the political.

In the interior Algeria Islam remained as the principle means of self identification, the source of values and the ultimately the principal refuge of alien peoples' laws and values dominated the country<sup>46</sup>. But for the bulk of the urban leaders the Islam affirmed was a cultural Islam, an essential element of their national identity. For them Islam was neither a way of life nor a way of restructuring society or a political system.

Ben Badis got ample support from Islamic towns such as Tlemcen and Constantine and peasant small holders. Messali-Hadj-the radical leader-formed MTLD. As a continuation to this, Ahammad Ben Bella, a young revolutionary, formed Secret Organization (OS) in 1947. OS called for an immediate revolt against the French rule. A new organization CRUA (Revolutionary Council for Unity and Action) was formed in 1954 to monitor the direct actions against colonial rule. All these developments led to the formation of National Liberation Front (FLN) and its military wing National Liberation Army (NLA). Sooner, moderates like Ferhat Abbas and other religious leaders joined the movement. As it reveals, the political discourse in Algeria has been highly influenced by Islamic movements and Islamic values since the period of anti-colonial struggle. The vocabulary, which was used by the nationalist movements, was more religious – like the liberation of Muslims and the emphasis on Muslim law and customs.

People like Messali Hadj used green and white banner of Abd al-Qadir, the great grand father of Islamic resistance in Algeria, which also had a symbolic

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p. 78.

value<sup>47</sup>. Hadj was the first Algerian nationalist who demanded for full independence from French imperial rule. By 1956, the revolutionary movement of Algeria had become a coalition of all streams of resistance including radicals, liberals and Islamic reformists.

Nowadays, the political Islamic groups in various Muslim countries follow more or less similar political ideas, which are basically derived from the thoughts of thinkers like Hasan al Banna (1906-1949) Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abdul Mawdudi (1903-1979). The crux of their arguments can be summarized as Quran and *Sunnah* are the foundations of Muslims' life, Islam constitutes an all embracing ideology for individual and social life for state and society and restoration of Muslim pride, power and rule requires a return to Islam the implementation of God's law and guidance for state and society<sup>48</sup>.

The rejection of Algerian manifesto (UDMA) of Ferhat Abbas by colonial administration was a milestone to Islamic radicalism in the nationalist movement in Algeria because it ultimately strengthened the position of Islamic groups in the nationalist movement of Algeria. Increasing political activism in the name of Islam was a major trend in Algeria during the different phase of anti-colonial struggle. When the nationalist trend began to diminish, the neofundamentalist interpretation of Islam started becoming dominant in Algerian anti-colonial movement. It is visible that by 1956, the nationalist leaders like Ferhat Abbas were forced to join the National Liberation Movement, which was the product of Radical Islamists, like Messali Hadj.

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<sup>47</sup> Arion and Mitchel, n.41, p.257.

<sup>48</sup> Esposito, n.5, p. 7.

## CHAPTER II

### ISLAM AND STATE IN MODERN ALGERIA: [1962 - 1992]

The postcolonial Algeria witnessed a power struggle soon after the achievement of independence in 1962. The major factor, which led to this, was the peculiar nature of the struggle for independence. Unlike in most of the other third world nations, the struggle for independence in Algeria was more a military victory than a political one. The struggle had become a bloody war by mid-1950s and was led by militant elements. It is obvious that Ahamed Ben Bella, the first president of the newly formed Algerian Republic, who played an extremely important role in the war against the French, was challenged by the military elements under the leadership of General Houari Boumedienne. Besides, Husays Ait Ahmid, a Kabyle leader from Berber Minority community and Ferhat Abbas, a hero in the freedom struggle were also played important roles in the power struggle. As a result of all such developments the undertaking of substantive economic and social change was delayed in Algeria for a while.

Colonialism had a formative influence on the contemporary politics of developing countries. Hamza Alavi, a prominent theorist of postcolonial state points out that over developed state and its bureaucratic apparatus is an important character of postcolonial state<sup>1</sup>. The state heavily relies on such institutions and enjoys relative autonomy in its functioning, i.e., such a state is not under the control of a single dominant class. The state involves in the economic and political activities in a highhanded manner. The major institutions of state in such a system are

<sup>1</sup> Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shahin (eds.), *Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies*, (London, 1982), pp. 289-90.

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Bureaucracy, military-oligarchy and the police. These institutions got importance because they had been particularly significant for the day-to-day functioning of colonial administration. As a result, these institutions had developed to a greater degree than the institutions of political democracy. The same structure is continued in the postcolonial period<sup>2</sup>.

Generally the nature of the Algerian political system was single party authoritarianism. The search for an alternative system started when involvement of state in economic activities increased and the state failed to fulfill the demands of the people. This is the context where Islam emerged as an alternative ideology, which could consolidate the opposition. Once the state faced a crisis, its sources of legitimacy were questioned and that ultimately led the state to a vulnerable situation.

Islam has been playing the key role to understand the culture, society and politics of Algeria. It is an inseparable part of the formation of national identity of Algerians. The struggle against colonialism mainly strengthened to the Islamic identity consciousness among Algerians. During the time of French imperialism, the ideological and cultural struggle of Algerians against colonialism was consolidated under the banner of Islam. Though it was more or less related to Islamic reformism in the primary stage, later it gained some political nature. The slogan – ‘Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language and Algeria is my home land’ was more nationalistic in its essence. The Islamic factor came in with a political/nationalistic face by the declaration of War of Independence in 1954. Moreover, the promise of General De Gaulle in 1958 gave Algerians full French citizenship within the

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<sup>2</sup> B C Smith, *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development*, (London, 1996), p.182.

'Muslim law and customs'. This strengthened the identity conscious in Algeria<sup>3</sup>. As a result of this, the struggle against colonialism was becoming a struggle of Algerian Muslims against French Christians to a certain extent. But, once the independence was achieved, Islam has been influenced by secular politics as it served the interest of the ruling elite. Due to the domination of leftist, secularist and other modernist elements in the development policies of state in the Boumedienne regime, Islam had lost its influence in the state policies as well as in the decision making process.

The national culture of Algeria has been formed over centuries around shared symbols, customs, feelings and language. For the advocates of national culture, the revolution was primarily a defense of the faith of the people. They claimed that they are the legitimate trustees of national culture and Arabo-Islamic values<sup>4</sup>. The achievement of political, administrative, economic and military power by Algerians created a new situation and from the very beginning the religious elements started demanding total Arabisation of schooling education and public services. Ordinary Algerians were more or less very conscious about their cultural identity, which is mainly based on Islam due to certain historic factors that were related to Islamic reformism and struggle against colonialism.

### **The FLN, State and the Question of Legitimacy**

The formation of FLN and the declaration of war of independence were the important turning points in the history of Algeria. The major objective of the war of independence was the formation of an independent Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles<sup>5</sup>. FLN was an umbrella organisation containing

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<sup>3</sup> Louis A. Aroian and Richard P. Mitchell, *The Modern Middle East and North Africa*, (London, 1984), p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> Rashid Tlaemciani, *State and Revolution in Algeria*, (London 1986), p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> Mohmoud A. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, (London, 1994), p. 66.

various currents of nationalist vision. There were many Islamic elements within the FLN who endeavored to legitimize the society through the state. They tried to define and redefine everything – family, education and law – in Islamic terms. However, their attempt was to formulate a content of Islam in terms of socio-economic and political realities rather than spiritual norms and values. The major advantage of ruling regime in Algeria in the first phase of war of independence was that the nominal Islamic status, popularity and legitimacy through national struggle and the total control over national territory and population. The leading role of FLN in the war of independence was the major source of legitimacy. The then secretary of FLN, Ahmad Ben Bella became the first president of the state. But after a few years he was simply sidelined from controlling actual power. And gradually FLN was sidelined due to the capturing of power by General Boumedienne. FLN was taken over by a military elite group. They occasionally referred the importance of FLN in their speeches, but in practice they rejected any interference from FLN in any decision making process.

FLN looked upon Islam nearly as one element of national and cultural identity, which stays far away from a commitment to religion. The nature of the movement was more nationalist than religious. This was the major reason of the success of the formation of an independent state in Algeria with a secularist vision, even though it was more French than Algerian and was contradictory to the earlier declaration of 1954. The Islam factor, which had been furthered in 1954, was simply forgotten by regime in 1962. Islam became a part of state bureaucracy and was used to justify state socialism. The FLN run state followed the logic of its own nationalist vision and it strictly controlled the religious establishment. During the time of Ben

Bella (1962-65), the state was a highly Europeanized one in its structure and functioning.

Socialism and nationalism were the leading ideologies in Algerian political discourse during the early years of independence and Frantz Fanon was the role model of an average Algerian nationalist. The early period of Boumedienne was a transition period of Algerian political system from single party authoritarianism to military authoritarianism. As a parallel to this, the existing ideologies were pushed to the background of the political discourse.

The promise of FLN in 1954 was the restoration of the sovereign democratic and socialist Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles. As a contradictory to this, the state which FLN established was 'democratic and popular Algerian Republic' certainly not an Islamic state. At the same time, state incorporated Islam and formed a Ministry of Religious Affairs to give an Islamic character to the state. That being the official claim, the need of the hour to get legitimacy for the state. As contrary to the declaration of 1954 and the basic principles of Algerian state, the state has never been a democratic, socialist, Islamic and in no way popular<sup>6</sup>.

The excessive state centralization and control over religious education and mosques decreased the position of religion and blocked its existence as an independent entity<sup>7</sup>. The autonomous religious foundation was weakened by declaring Islam as the religion of state as well as the declaration of Imams as the employers of the state. The ruling military regime even imposed state certification

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Azzedine Layachi and Abdel Kader Haireche, "National Development and Political Protest: Islamists in the Maghreb Country", *Arab Studies Quarterly* (London), vol. 14, no. 213, 1992, p.171.



and screened Friday Mosque Sermon<sup>8</sup>. The process of clericalisation of Islam in Algeria has a colonial legacy and it aimed to control and de-legitimise the cultural/Islamic opposition. In Algeria, several ideological concessions and adjustments were made toward reislamisation while Islamists political participation was blocked for years. The state, like all other states in the region used their power, a form of reislamisation from the top both to take the state out of contestation and to give itself religious legitimacy<sup>9</sup>. It started during the time of Ahamad Ben Bella and continued by his successors. The same rulers who referred socialism, nationalism and secularism did lay claim to Islam. In effect, reislamisation was only a state clericalisation according to the interest of the regime. The official clergy functioned within the limits made by government that controlled and monopolized all kind of religious activities. In 1966, state formed a higher Islamic Council which was granted the monopoly on *fatwa*. Besides, state established several Islamic Universities and *Madrassas* and controlled such institutions. In 1976 government declared Friday as official holiday and subsequently official radio stations are being opened to Islamic preachings. The introduction of Algerian family code in 1984 was a major development in this regard. As a result of all these, Islam was put under strict state control but this process popularized the discourse based on Islam and strengthened the process of reislamisation of Algerian society.

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<sup>8</sup> John P. Entelis, "Political Islam in Algeria: A Non-Violent Dimension", *Current History* (Philadelphia), vol. 94, no. 588, January 1994, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, (Cambridge, 1994), p.125.

## The Growth of Dissent Against Official Islam

The form of official Islam is challenged in the beginning itself by a section of Islamists who were in favor of the formation of a full fledged Islamic state of Algeria ruled by Islamic law and Islamic practices. The independent Algerian state at an early stage set about building a civil religion in which nationalist ideology colored with socialism was assigned an historic weight more important than that of Islam<sup>10</sup>. The rapid urbanization and the emergence of a powerful middle class changed the social composition as well as tastes and values of the society. The influence of Islam has declined in the social structure and Islamism has strengthened as a reaction to this.

After independence, the question of compatibility of Islam and socialism was centered to Algerian political discourse and was especially in the debates of *al quyam* association<sup>11</sup>. Algerian rulers found Islamic ideology attractive for their political programmes such as socialism, social justice and democracy. The veterans of Islamism were opposed to any form of socialism as an official doctrine of the new state. Besides, such notions were quite remote from the preoccupations of the mass of traditionally minded Muslims especially in the villages of Algeria. The contradiction between the orientation of rulers and the ruled essentially created a situation, which was very much appropriate for the opposition to capitalize on the dissatisfaction of the vast majority of the ruled under the ideological framework of Islam. The preachers had always demanded a state that would inculcate certain Islamic moral values and renounce the imported traits of Communism and Secularism. Islam was coming back to the political forefront of Algeria both in

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<sup>10</sup> John Ruedy, *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, (Washington, 1994), p.104.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p.114.

theory and practice with an official support. In most of the cases that was a simple assertion of traditional values and attitudes. The uprisings of 1980s was a result of this conscious with the steadily piled up dissent among the masses. Though the rulers initiated islamisation of state, it had gone out of the state control within a short span of time and soon it has become a regime challenging ideology.

Islamist movements used the power of the mosques and the streets to challenge the authority of regime viewed as illegitimate. The growing dissatisfaction of people and their consolidation under an Islamic ideological framework, they came out with certain demands in the form of charters. In 1976 they demanded for the general Arabisation of the civil services as a continuation o their previous demand – Arabisation of education. Such demands had gone to the extent of affirming Islam as the state religion. The state needs to act according to the precepts of *Shariah* and emphasize Islamic values rather than the western values. Gradually a popular dissident religious force had originated outside the control of state. When state has used islam as a source of legitimacy and instrument to consolidate its rule, people see in Islam an expression of their hope.

The basic nature of Islamism remained as a socio cultural movement, embodying the protest and frustration of a generation of youth that had not been integrated socially or politically<sup>12</sup>. The negative effects of modernization such as the massive migration to towns, the breakdown of traditional family and social values by the adoption of western life style added with economic problems like corruption and unemployment, strengthened resurgence as an alternative to these miseries. Majority of the Muslims in Algeria believed that the reassertion of cultural identity could be achieved by the resurgence of Islam. The welfare system such as public

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<sup>12</sup> Roy, n. 9, p. 125.

distribution system of food stuffs, free education, free medical care and employment opportunities provided by the state was an important aspect of legitimacy. It was indeed a substitute to political participation where the system functioning under common authoritarian arrangement-‘we take care of you, we rule over you’.

The real challenge which Algerian state faced was the economic problems. In fact the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria to a state challenging ideology was a product of the ever-deteriorating economic conditions in 1980s. Mounting deficits, general economic stagnation and other deteriorating social conditions had grown to the extent questioning the age-old legitimacy formula. The economic liberalization and political relaxation joined with harsh realities of daily life led to the state to an anarchical situation, which strengthened the hold of Islamists in the society. The major reason of the 1988 riot in Algeria was the chronic failure of the state to satisfy the socio economic needs of the people such as basic education, available housing, employment opportunities, and adequate healthcare which they had been enjoying for a long time. During the first 20 years of Algeria government could impose its authority over people with the backing of a relatively prosperous economy and welfare policies. The income that state managed from the petrochemical industries had functioned as a pillar of capitalist economic model in Algeria. As a parallel to the increasing importance of oil in economy, the agricultural sector was simply neglected and the country fallen to a condition from food self sufficiency to importer of most of its basic foodstuffs<sup>13</sup>.

A significant difference of 1970s and 80s between state and Islamic opposition was that, in 1970s the latter failed or was not in a position to attack the

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<sup>13</sup> Dirk Vandewalle,, “Islam in Algeria: Religion, Culture and Opposition in a Rentier State” in John L. Esposito (ed) *Political Islam, Revolution, Radicalism and Reform*, (London, 1997), pp. 38-39.

state for its socio- economic policies. Though certain Islamic undercurrents were flowing in Algerian political system, it didn't come out openly because the comparatively better economic scenario and the stability of government. Instead, the Islamic opposition attacked the state on policies related to Islamic identity. Their argument was that the modernization and westernization of the state were creating negative moral values among Algerian Muslims. Till 1980s, the Islamists were mainly functioning in association with government under Ministry of Religious Affairs. They were not in a position to challenge the strong government, but they had tried to expand and strengthen the Islamic components of government programmes. They almost succeeded in achieving the authenticity of Arab and Islamic society in Algerian polity. Though Boumedienne could succeed to implement his policies with the support of leftists, secularists, and other modernist elements of Algerian society-especially with the backing of the strong economy built up over oil revenue-he failed to prevent the increasing influence of Islamist in the Algerian society. The Arabisation of education and other policies were the manifestation of such a reality. It is true that strong central administration and economic stability reduced the strength of opposition in the operational level. They failed to translate their cultural agenda into politics<sup>14</sup>.

The situation was changing over the period in Algeria. On the one hand the nationalist trend was fast diminishing and on the other hand the Islamic influence was increasing. Islam was becoming the guiding principle of vast majority in the society due to the failure of secularization<sup>15</sup>. Popular culture and religious movements rose from a complex ideological, social and economic context, which

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<sup>14</sup> John L Esposito, "Fundamentalism", [www. bgtatzer.de/aga/funda.htm](http://www.bgtatzer.de/aga/funda.htm), p 2.

<sup>15</sup> Alan R. Taylor, *Islamic Question in the Middle East Politics*, (London, 1988), p. 113.

was dominated by the non-fulfilling of promises, failure of agricultural revolution and other socio cultural tensions<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, the secular nationalist experiment in Algeria, which was a blind imitation of the western model, was not at all appropriate to Algeria. In this context, the Islamic fundamentalism, which has given major ideological challenge to state easily succeeded in integrating the Arabist's grievances within its own doctrine. It could easily improve and strengthen its social base especially among the youths who were the major victims of the economic failure of state. Above all, as a result of all these developments a new situation was created which was suitable to the translation of the cultural agenda of Islamic opposition into politics, which had long-term impacts. Once the regime/state faced economic troubles, all these miscreants were further strengthened and grew to the form of a regime challenging ideology.

The authoritarian regime of Algeria had managed to contain the political opposition by forcing the Islamic radicals to act in a diffused and disorganized fashion especially during the first two decades of independence<sup>17</sup>. Mainly two different streams of Islamism were developed during this time. The Islam which was promoted by the ruling class functioned as an apology to the status quo and followed a top to bottom approach was called official Islam. The second stream, popular Islam, functioned as an opposition/dissident to official Islam and it followed a bottom to top approach in the islamisation of society.

Cultural and moral opposition of the Islamists were translated into a growing political context by the 1980s as popular Islam (the religious establishment formed beyond the control of State) opposed official Islam<sup>18</sup>. At the same time, state

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<sup>16</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Islam in the Modern World*, (London, 1980), p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> Youssef M. Choucri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, (London, 1990), p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> John Ruedy, n. 10, pp. 82-83.

changed its strategy and started repression of radical Islamic movements, which finally led to an open clash between state and Islamists. Government expanded their control over Algerian political life. In an attempt to retake the legitimacy of freedom struggle government officials are asked to join in FLN, a long back dead organisation<sup>19</sup>. With an alternative agenda, Islamists stimulated a social movement that questioned the major foundations of state legitimacy – especially Islamic nature of state<sup>20</sup>. They upheld the national charter of 1976 as their ideological blue print and demanded a full-fledged Islamic republic. The government took some counter measures to stop the organisation of dissident elements. The major reform measures in religious sphere were investing more money in religious institutions, modernizing religious teachings, the increase in the use religious slogans in the media and the creation of a network of religious training institutions. The popular opposition to the state blocked it from reaping the fruits of these new measures. But opposition had successfully reaped the fruits. The constitutional and institutional reforms, which followed this, complicated the situation.

### **The Islamic Challenge to State Secularism in Postcolonial Algeria**

The Islamic challenge to secular statusquo was common phenomenon in the postcolonial state in Middle East and North Africa. The legitimacy of the territorial governments established after decolonisation was always opened to challenges on Islamic grounds. The nation/state was imposed on societies where the culture of public institutions was weak. In such states, the new ruling elites legitimized themselves by appealing to nationalist goals<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics: The Formation of Modern Middle East*, (London, 1992), pp. 279-80.

<sup>20</sup> John Ruedy, n.10, p. 76.

<sup>21</sup> Malise Ruthven, "Islamist Movements in the Middle East and North Africa", *Europa*, (2002), p.11.

The nature of Islamism is totally changing after the war of independence. During the colonial period different movements used modernization of religion as an important weapon in their anti colonial resistance. But in postcolonial period, it has been becoming increasingly fundamentalist and the strategy increasingly violent<sup>22</sup>. Return of the people to religious practices was a general trend of the Arab world since 1960s. The Islamism has become a social phenomenon. The Arabisation policies and family law were the examples of such attempts. But Islamists claimed that they are the true representatives of Islam and they started fighting against the secular state.

Westernization and secularization of politics and society and the failure of development strategies created a situation of popular protest in Algeria. In spite of industrialization and urbanization, there was certainly enough tradition left to feed a potential traditionalist movement. Tradition was used as an instrument of self-protection against the inevitable shortcomings of government policies and economic difficulties<sup>23</sup>. When regime used this to preserve the status quo, the same was used to break the status quo. The formation of *Jamiat Al-Qiyam Al-Islamiyya* (the Association of Islamic Values) shortly after the independence was the earliest manifestation of the dissatisfaction of the Islamists<sup>24</sup>. They strongly opposed the Western kind of military and Bureaucracy, which protected the establishment. They were very critical about the foreign cultural influences and most of their demands were anti-secularist in its essence. Though the movement was crushed by state their doctrines remained uncrushed and they laid a strong foundation to another Islamic resistance to state.

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<sup>22</sup> Milton Viorst, "Algeria's Long Night", *Foreign Affairs (New York)*, Nov-Dec 97, p. 93

<sup>23</sup> Said Amir Arjomand (ed.), *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, (London, 1984), p.116.

<sup>24</sup> Faksh, n. 5, p. 67.



While nationalist doctrines became politically active and sidelined the Islamic issues during the struggle of independence, this trend began to diminish and neofundamentalist interpretation became dominant. Once they were liberated from the foreign control, other issues started coming to the forefront. Islamists started demanding the implementation of the principle of Islamic polity such as, Quran should be the basis of law, and government should function by Islamic law. Their demands were getting public attention and support in the changed situation of independence.

By the end of 1980s the situation of Algeria had undergone a rapid change and masses rejected the political and socio economic elite. People started identifying Islam and its symbols as a significant foundation for the resistance/political action against the state. Though the role of Islam was limited the state constitution, it maintained its importance in the society and has the potential to reconstruct the society<sup>25</sup>. In countries like Algeria where opposition to the established government was either restricted or banned altogether, the use of Islam as a vehicle of dissent was appealing because its credentials gave it a degree of immunity from official persecution. It is true that all such secular nationalist regimes paid lip service to Islam or were extremely careful not to openly challenge it<sup>26</sup>.

The ongoing conflict in Algeria between Islamism and secularism is extraordinary complex one – intellectually, sociologically, economically and politically. In the general political discourse in North Africa secularism associated with colonialism, neocolonialism and the western world view whereas Islamism is an indigenous reaction to it. However, secular nationalists could maintain their

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<sup>25</sup> Chouciri, n. 17, p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Rucdy, n. 10, p.114.

authority after independence because that was the dominant ideology in the struggle against colonialism. The westernized urban elites who were the main proponents of secular nationalism created a political system to perpetuate their own power and to preclude meaningful challenge from competing ideologies and factions. Anyhow, in the latest stage, the struggle has got a character of the attempt of state to protect secularism and the opposition's attempt to form an Islamic state

### **The Economic Crisis and the Growth of Islamism**

The political crisis developed in Algeria in late 1980s was a crisis closely connected with the economic crisis of a rentier state. Since state is the only organisation, which involve in economic activities, the crisis make a reflection to the state and it will forcefully bring a structural and institutional change. In total the economic failure leads to the failure of ruling regime in a rentier state.

A strong state should have powerful legislature and executive, clearly developed structures, coherent military and effective legal system. But states like Algeria, which have rentier economy, develop only certain institutions such as distributive institutions and extractive and regulatory institutions. Such weak institutions are not in a position to absorb even the smaller impacts in economy. This leads to a structural administrative failure in a crisis situation. When the state seeks legitimacy in the name of economic/welfare policies the impact of such crisis will be disastrous.

In Algeria, the income generation of the state was almost depended on non-productive economic activities that is, from oil revenue. So that, the political and economic of this rentier development functions as a key factor in the government opposition relations. The early years of independence, the ruling regime was

strengthened by its economic leverage. Lack of people's participation in production process enlarged the authority of state in the decision making process. The welfare policies of the government and its absolute control over economic interactions of the people had given legitimacy to the ruling elite of Algeria for a long time.

The economic policies of the new regime of 1979 were totally different from those of their predecessors. Chadly Benjedid introduced new economic reforms in which productivity and profit has become the guiding principles of every economic activity. When this economic liberalization programme was launched, the long-standing claim of Algerian state – to pursue equity and economic justice for all Algerians became a source of national ridicule. The investment of state industry fall 21% in the year 1981 and an inflation rate of 42% were recorded<sup>27</sup>. The slogans of equity and equality returned to the political discourse in Algeria not by government but by Islamists<sup>28</sup>.

Oil and gas industry, which was the major source of revenue of Algeria, financed for the development plan of the state till 1986. There was a gradual decline in oil price in international oil market started in 1980 and that reached its lowest level by 1986. Since Algeria was depending on imports for 70% of its food requirements the impact of the decline of oil price was severe. If the GDP growth in 1984 was 5.2%, it went down to 0.6% in 1986 and -2.7% in 1988. The oil price decline was 70% in this period<sup>29</sup>. The oil revenue fell by 21% in Algeria and the foreign debt increased to the level of \$ 24 billion in 1985-86 periods. Though Algeria was supposed to be a socialist state in 1980, planned economy and political mobilization had never been there in Algeria. When the state faced a financial crisis

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Vandewalle, n. 13, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ruedy, n. 10, p. 81.

in early 1980s, the entire system had gone through a massive restructuring. The possible economic restructure was a transition toward more market-oriented economy. Increase of socio economic inequalities and the virtual bankruptcy of the state had become the order of the day in Algeria.

The rhetoric of national liberation, upheld by the monopolist ruling parties was discredited as those parties failed to address fundamental economic and structural problems. The balance of payments crisis has ultimately led to the outburst of popular unrest and apparently to the restructuring of politico economic systems. The social programme of the state was the critical factor, which decided the relationship between the state and society. As a result of economic reforms, state withdrew from welfare activities. Islamic movements strengthened their social space by taken over the role of state in such welfare activities. They filled the gaps caused by the government failure to deal with housing shortages and social problems. Then the state was forced to withdraw totally from social service sectors owing to the pressure of IMF, Islamic organisations made good use of such situations and functioned as a parallel/alternative to government. The situation was slowly moving in favor of Islamists.

### **Islam as a Political Opposition in Postcolonial Algeria**

The Islamist movements in Algeria are generally political movements that function for political power in the name of Islamic authenticity. They mainly emerged largely outside the state control, under the shadow of independent mosques and groupings. These movements provided the most important vehicles for oppositional mobilizations since independence. These movements were generally different both in their ideological orientations and in their socio political action. They used Islamic

symbolism as a means to expressing and mobilizing dissent. Even though people who had little genuine Islamic feeling also joined with Islamists because of their understanding that the best way to challenge the established order was to associate with Islamic resurgent organisations<sup>30</sup>. To them the bureaucratic state elite was singing the promises of socialism and living the lights of capitalism. Islamists proposed comprehensive re-islamisation of the state as a solution to the socio economic problems of the state.

The coherence and the concentrated power and the total absence of space for independent political activities essentially created a political opposition to the regime. Though this opposition was not strong enough to take the power, the quest for political participation and power made them capable to challenge and destabilize the existing regime<sup>31</sup>.

The political liberalisation and the formal introduction of multi-party system in Algeria in 1989 gave a space to Islamic organisations to intervene in the political process of the country. By the riots of 1988, the Islamist opposition have been able strengthen their roots in the mosques, schools and colleges of the country. The nation wide referendum suggested the end of the socialist era, introduction of the multi-party system and the abolition of censorship over press. The struggle for legitimacy between state representatives and Islamists in 1990s brandishes the powerful symbols of national identity. The concepts of extension of public liberties and cultural renewal have readopted into the political vocabulary<sup>32</sup>. When the election was held in 1990, the claim of the political parties - that they are the protestors of Islam – was marked as the one single element in the election campaign.

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<sup>30</sup> Taylor, n.15, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> John Howe, "The Crisis of Algerian Nationalism and the Rise of Islamic Integralism", *New Left Review* (London), 1992, pp. 92-93.

<sup>32</sup> Vandwalle, n.13, p. 43.

In Algeria, Islam had resented an enduring opposition to the form of the type of nationalism used earlier by the state. There was a dramatic shift in the focus of the election which moved to the range of persuasion and manipulation of symbols ranging far beyond the socio economic issues which led to the riots.

As a result of participation in election, Islamism in Algeria has been undergoing a transition process as the reformation to political organisation. The crux of the matter is that the support, which Islamists had got in the elections, was more out of anger with the FLN and state and deteriorating conditions of everyday life than in support of their political programmes or worldview. By the end of 1980s, government lost control over the mosques due to the infiltration of opposition into the official Islamic establishment. On the other side, society was also moving more and more to Islam. The number of veiled women increased. Some western educated people--teachers, lawyers and students – rejected western values and adopted Islamic values. The reason of this was their anger towards the greed and corruption that they saw in the official political and religious establishment. Many small ultra religious orthodox terrorist groups were formed in Algeria were functioned under the shadow of mainstream Islamic organisations (e.g. FIS) during this period. The ideological hegemony of Islam was increasing the Algerian society and polity during the period late 1980s and early 1990s.

## Conclusion

The ever deteriorating conditions of state and the unavoidable shift in economic policy provided the emerging Islamic opposition in Algeria a powerful sense of identity as a refuge from a world hegemonic discourse dominated by western imperialism which reflected strongly within the country's political culture, created purposely by those who came in power in 1962<sup>33</sup>. The economic deprivation, social seclusion and political under representation were created an appropriate situation to Islamist to strengthen their position. The entire discourse in Algeria was slowly changing from nationalist and socialist rhetoric to religious terminology. It is interesting to note that, some elements in the Islamic opposition argued that the problem of shortage of consumer goods is no a problem of economic policy and management but a religious problem. According to them, if the rulers and the tradesman were good Muslims this situation would not have emerged<sup>34</sup>. They found a spiritual reason and proposed a spiritual solution to a material problem. The real problem of this was the imbalance between the growth rates of population and economy. An average annual population growth rate of 3% recorded in Algeria during 1970s and 80s<sup>35</sup>, a negative economic growth rate. Besides, the well-developed agricultural sector in Algeria had undergone a shocking decline in postcolonial period and it created an additional to the state as ever growing food imports<sup>36</sup>.

Regime failures, economic pressures and foreign influences were the reasons, which led to the reforms in economy and polity. The state was losing

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<sup>33</sup> Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam, Policy Paper*, (CSDP, JNU, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Jean Leca "Opposition in the Middle East and North Africa", *Government and Opposition* (London), vol. 32, no. 3, 1997, p. 558.

<sup>35</sup> Vandewalle, n.13, pp. 40-41.

<sup>36</sup> John Howe, n.31, pp. 888-90.

control over people. The reforms in economy reduced the role of state in controlling the economic activities of individuals and the new electoral law permitted the opposition parties to contest in elections. Unfortunately, the people who have moved most vigorously to cease the new political opportunities were militant Islamist groups, which are more interested in the formation of Islamic state<sup>37</sup>. They widely misused the newly developed democratic space by conducting number of strikes. The demands, which were raised in such strikes, were contradictory to the real problems.

The reforms which government introduced were untimely and were lacking enough groundwork. Instead of making comprehensive action plan to address the disastrous economic condition, the state functioned with its authoritarian programmes and policies. It is clear that, the popular support, which Islamists got during the end of s and early 1990s, was not because people believed that Islam is the solution to the problem of the society. At the same time, they believed that at least Islamists would overthrow the corrupted regime. Besides, the Arabisation process, which has been followed since long time, created a situation where discussions have focused on Islam, culture and identity. It is clear that, though people realised that Islamists are not interested in their real problems especially after the provincial elections, they were forced to support Islamists due to the unpopularity of the ruling regime and the absence of an effective alternative<sup>38</sup>.

In Algeria confrontation between Islam and the state is not primarily a struggle over defining a new economic arrangements, it is intimately linked to radically different versions of what state should look like and what role citizen

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<sup>37</sup> Michel Field, *Inside the Arab World*, (London, 1994), pp. 240-42.

<sup>38</sup> Viorst, n. 22, pp. 87-88.



should assume within the political system. Since the state was strongly interventionist, it used its distributive and re-distributive economic power for its own purposes. The state was ruled in the name of the people by a self-conscious elite minority. The emergence of Islamism was fundamentally a process against economic, political, cultural and ideological disintegration of Algerians. The mainstream of opposition targeted the ruling elite of bureaucracy and military and the material corruption and moral bankruptcies of the so-called secular, nationalist regime sped and strengthen this process. Even the secular opposition of the state couldn't tolerate with the regime especially after 1988 riots. In Algeria, for last nine years military tries to maintain its hold on political power and acts as the protector of secularism, democracy and multiethnic character of state.

There is no sincere attempt to restore peace and democracy in Algeria. Violation of civil rights, human rights and lack of judicial freedom are the order of the day in Algeria. Both the military and Islamic opposition have become the violator of basic human rights of the Algerians. Protection of the existing power configuration by any means is the single agenda in front of the authoritarian military regime in Algeria. On the other hand, Islamic opposition uses extremely violent means to break the status quo.

## CHAPTER III

### THE IDEOLOGY AND THE PROGRAMME OF FIS

*Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) was founded on February 19, 1989 at the al Sunna mosque in Babel Oued in Algeria. Several hundred preachers and members of different opposition groups had participated in the rally, which was conducted as a part of the formation of FIS. Many of them had been active in clandestine fundamentalist groupings that had sprouted up over the years and had served prison sentences during the repression of the Islamists in the mid 1980s<sup>1</sup>. They were the members of Islamic organisations like *Movement Islamique d' Algeria* (MIA) and *Organisation Speciale* (OS).

The newly developed situation in Algeria during late 1980s, of political liberalization and formal introduction of multi party system had given a space to the Islamic organisations to intervene in the political process of the country. Above all, the socio-economic situation of the country was highly suitable for a radical political transformation. This new order was mainly institutionalized by the adoption of a new constitution through a national referendum, which suggested the end of socialist era, introduction of multi party system, introduction of elections, abolition of censorship over press etc. Islamic groups had flourished as Algerian state socialism failed to resolve country's socio-economic problems. The FIS with a national programme and effective intervention in mosque and social life of the people, which

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<sup>1</sup> Tachau Frank (ed.), *Political Parties of the MiddleEast &North Africa*. (London, 1992), p.40.

resulted in its emergence as the largest of these groups, has become a regime challenging ideology<sup>2</sup>.

The FIS emerged in 1991 as Algeria's dominant political party. FIS got a landslide victory in the election that was held on June 1990 on the basis of a new constitution<sup>3</sup>. Until this election, the authorities and the state controlled media in general underestimated the growing strength of FIS. Front was an amalgam of different currents of political thoughts within the Islamic movement but their ultimate goal- 'the formation of an Islamic state based on *Shariah* united them. The inherent contradiction in their ideology reflected both in strategy and tactics.

FIS got support from almost all sections of the society. However the most important support base of FIS was, the marginalized, frustrated unemployed men under the age of 30 who constituted a large segment of the Algerian society<sup>4</sup>. This was the group, which gave FIS an identity of social protest movement against the oppressive regime. They are the group who suffered the most from the failure of economy. It is important to note that their support to FIS was more out of anger with FLN led military backed regime and deteriorating conditions of everyday life than in support of the FIS's ideology, programme and world view. FIS drew support from many- the educated class to the common masses. Most of its leaders are from highly educated aristocratic background. Number of leaders and supporters were engineers and technicians by training and the largest concentration of Islamist support was among University students especially in science departments and technical faculties.

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<sup>2</sup> John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori, "Democratisation and Islam", *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol.45, no.3, p, 432.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Mortimer, 'Islamists, Soldiers, and Democrats: The Second Algerian War'. *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol.50, no.1, Winter 1996, p.19.

<sup>4</sup> Frank, n.1, p.42.

FIS was founded by Dr. Abbassi Madani-a western educated University Professor- and Sheikh Ali Belhadj- a schoolteacher and a preacher- on 18 February 1989<sup>5</sup>. It contained three major schools of thought of political Islam during the early years. The first group-Islamic nationalists-advocated Islam as a solution to Algerian problems. The second group was the traditional Islamic universalists. They advocated the restoration of Islamic state and social order. The third group was more violent and aggressive radicals who were called Afghanists<sup>6</sup>, trained from Afghan Mujahiddin camps. They advocated violent confrontation with the government/state, which only has any meaning.

In its initial stage FIS was indeed less a political party representing interest than a social protest movement against the power structure. But the usurpation of power by military in Algeria affected the FIS mainly in its mode of operation. As a result of this, the leaders of FIS decided to enter into political sphere. In the meanwhile many small ultra orthodox religious groups and terrorist groups were formed in Algeria. They started operating under the shadow of mainstream political organisations like FIS. The differences among the FIS leaders –both ideological and on *modus operandi* - were very clear and it increased the tensions in the political scenario in the newly developed political situation. Some of these leaders acted as patrons of such ultra orthodox religious groups. The army justified their action (interference) because according to them that was done to preserve the Algerian state and constitution. The newly emerged political discourse in Algeria in 1990s was fundamentally between proposed Islamic state by FIS and the existing undemocratic ruling party apparatus of the military state. Anyhow the ideological

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<sup>5</sup> Jawed A. Haifa (ed.), *Middle East in the New World Order*,(London,1994), p.43.

<sup>6</sup> Term used by John P. Entelis, " Political Islam: A Non-violent Dimension", *Current History* (Philadelphia), vol.94. n. 588, pp.14-16.

hegemony of Islam that dominated the Algerian politics was helpful to FIS to strengthen their roots in the society.

Rejecting all models of forced Islamic society, the nationalist leaders of the FIS like Abbasi Madani, Anwar Haddam and Abdel Kader Hashani supported the gradual application of *Shariah*. They advocated an electoral strategy for assuming power. But Ali Belhedj who was supposed to be the internationalist in FIS leadership even supported holy war (*jihad*) as a strategy to assume power. After the capture of power in certain Municipalities and provinces by 1991-92, Islamic Salvation Front followed a dual strategy of politics and diplomacy on the one hand and military resistance on the other<sup>7</sup>. It was mainly to put pressure over the ruling military group. Moderates and reformers among the FIS considered violence as a tactic of last resort. However, radicals considered it as central to establish a new social order. They proposed violent actions against the state and they tried to destruct the corrupted nation state totally and to create a pure authentic Islamic state.

The impact of military intervention on the ideological orientation of FIS was very critical. The revolutionary project of ideological transformation of the society was replaced by a plan to immediate implementation of the *Shariah*. But the political, economic and social programmes of state were challenged only in words. The major strategies FIS followed in this phase were the entry into political life and reinvestment in the social spheres like mores, customs and the policy to re-conquer the society through social action. The rapid spread of Islamic themes into the society was the inevitable result of this development.

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<sup>7</sup> Entelis, n.6, pp.15-16.

There are two schools of thought in FIS on the course of action<sup>8</sup>. One group advocates an Algerian solution for Algerian problems rejects all models of pan Islamic society and proposes electoral strategy for assuming power. They support the gradual application of *sharia*. They are the mainstream leaders – Abbasi Madani, Anwar Haddam, Abdelkader Hachani and Rabha Kebhir. They seek a political solution. Ali Benhedj and Kamareddine Khebane lead the other group that advocates a holy war. There was another group, which emerged in the latter phase called Afghanistes – violent, nihilistic radicals. The division between religious Islamists (preachers, led by Ali Benhedj) and reformist Islamists (politicians, led by Abbasi Madani) has appeared only in the second phase of the war. In this phase FIS followed politico-diplomatic strategy on one hand and military resistance on the other hand. When moderates take violence as a last resort to pressure the oppressive regime, radicals consider violence central strategy. When regime followed a policy of suppression, the supporters of moderate leaders are also forced to support armed resistance.

The first group - which advocates an Algerian solution for Algerian problems, rejected the authenticity of official and state sponsored Islam and instead they promoted non-political actions like education, culture and social activities. The second group is committed to a mass authentic Muslim society- they proposed direct political action to attain the same. Reforms in both state and society were the basic character of the programmes in their agenda. They conducted political organisation and mobilization in order to attain it. Militant hardliners followed the means of violence, terrorism and assassination to capture power. The suffering of a serious

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p.14.

loss of legitimacy to the ruling regime by various political and economic reasons ignited the process of opposition.

While these movements were sharing the common goal of an Islamic state, they were divergent in views, practices, strategy and tactics. The nationalist group in FIS considered the jihad as a religiously justified rebellion to attain power but through the electoral process and access to institutions of governance. The major religious demands which were raised by FIS and implemented by the provincial governments like the Arabisation of education, prohibition of alcohol and prohibition of mixing of sexes were taken from the fourteen points of Abbasi Madani<sup>9</sup> Another important stream of discourse in FIS was between historical founders and the new generation. Most of the historical founders were either from highly educated professionals or preachers. They were partly identified with *Salafiyya* - the reformist movement - and had participated in the war of independence. Abbasi Madani a prominent figure among them had even an ideological fight with FLN for many years during the war of independence.

The second was the radical Islamists who were mainly from the new generation of *Salafis*. They were the proponents of radicalization. Mustafa Boyali- the leading ideologue of this group proposed an armed struggle against the military state in the name of *jihad*<sup>10</sup>. They criticized the liberal nature of society and reforms. They argued that the only solution to the problem was that the complete overturn of the regime through an armed struggle based on the principle of disobedience. Ali Belhadj, a representative of the radical militant group, even stated that it is

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<sup>9</sup> Severine Labat, "Islamism and Islamists: The Emergence of New Types of Politico Religious Militants", cited in John Ruedy (ed.) *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, (New York, 1994), p.107.

<sup>10</sup> Entelis, n.6, p.18.

impossible to build an Islamic state by starting with impious institutions<sup>11</sup>. They were ideologically committed; they failed totally to address the socio-economic problems. It is also important to note that the state repression played an important role in the formation development and the continued influence of this group in the Algerian society of that time.

The third ideological group in the FIS/Islamic opposition was Islamo-technocrats. This group represents the first generation graduates since independence. They were highly educated and generally from University campuses and were products of the political socialization that was spread by Islamism in Universities during 1970s and 80s. Islamo-technocrats were more political in their orientation. Unlike their predecessors they have given little importance to the theory of gradual action/Islamisation<sup>12</sup>. They even did not seek the installation of a theocratic state. They opted for an electoral strategy to capture political power.

The Preachers group considered FIS as a channel to continue the collective-secret struggle that they had started against the state after the attainment of independence. Violence continued as a means of capturing state power for militant *Salafis* in FIS. For Islamic-technocrats, FIS was a vehicle of individual political advancement - through cooperating with electoral strategy. Preachers were concerned with the Islamisation of social order and defending the interest of the class of *Ulama*<sup>13</sup>. The Islamo-technocrats were integrating themselves into the functions of a power structure and followed participation strategy that they considered capable of running and perpetuating power. Radical Islamists identified

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Labat, *n. 9*, p.114.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p.78.



themselves as an alternative to the nation state. At the same time both functioned within and against the nation state and tried to mobilize people

All these groups functioned under the banner of FIS for a long time, till the radicals were expelled from the organisation. But the institutional and legal strategy of the FIS ultimately failed to overcome a system of authoritarianism, where democratisation was perceived as functioning exclusively in the service of a minority who were a part of a single party system. The militant elements in the FIS who opposed the participation strategy were strengthened by the highly authoritarian and oppressive nature of the régime. Though FIS brought together the diverse factions of the Islamic movements the inherent contradiction and conflicting concerns of different groups in the organisation resulted in the breaking of the organisation within a short span of time. The new generation of Islamic radicals, who has been intellectually inspired by FIS figures, has turned away from the movement following the suspension of the elections.

Serious constitutional reforms were the immediate impact of the food/civil riots (1988) in Algeria. The situation in Algeria was very volatile. It had adequate resources and a large active unemployed population. Its people were proud but outward looking. Algeria's professional intellectual ideologues influenced people through debates at youth centers<sup>14</sup>. They conducted mass rallies, large demonstrations and public assemblies and youths overwhelmingly participated in it.

Political Islam in Algeria aims at reestablishing Islam as a way of life through the institutionalization of a stable governing system, which ought to be representative of Algerian society. The intention of the Algerian political Islam is not to replace the present by a mystical past, but to restructure the modern social

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<sup>14</sup> Entelis, n.6, p.13.

order so that it conforms to Islamic principles and values. Under this, a selective-interactive approach to western political, economic and social expressions can be undertaken so long as there is no violation of Islamic moral principles.

Because of the increasing differences among the different ideological groups in FIS fundamentalist orientation got strengthened. It created a general atmosphere of tension in Algerian politics that FIS may use the victory to convert Algeria into an Islamic state through the change of constitution. This was further strengthened due to the warning of Islamists that their victory would change the fundamental nature of the Algerian state, which had been defined by the Algerian war of independence. Women were insisted to wear veil, alcohol and night clubs were prohibited and mixing of sexes were strictly banned by FIS as if those were the real problems to be addressed immediately. They concentrated on morality and implementing Islamic order. The fear became deep rooted in the society, thanks to such activities of FIS in their provinces. Here the focus of discourses shifted from state to society on the one side and political/economic problems to morality and Islamic character of state on the other. It was clear by then that Islamists/FIS was not interested to focus on the economy and functioning of politics, which were the root causes of the problem.

FIS has a well-organized structure. The directing organs of FIS are Consultative Council (*Majilis al-Shura*, 35-40 members) and National Executive Bureau. The compositions of these two bodies were never made public until 1991; even the identities of the most of the principal figures in the FIS were unknown to the public. The secrecy of the FIS in this regard exceeded even that of the FLN during the war. The organisation was formed in a structure as in the communist/Leninist parties. Until the spring of 1991 the only FIS leader to give

interviews to the media and issue formal public statements was Abbassi Madani; the official spokesman and its effective President<sup>15</sup>. People in the leadership are dedicated adherents and the periphery consists of followers who are willing to support the organisation to achieve its material goals.

### **Political Programme of FIS**

FIS, as a political party, has emerged from the people of Algeria as an expression of their identity and aspirations. Its mission is political, social, cultural, and civilisational. This compels its protagonists to recognize and adhere to the principles of global security, market economy, respect of human rights and the coexistence between Western and Muslim civilizations. Indeed the FIS has come to existence in a part of the world where people have gone through different frustrating experiences at all levels of human life. It intends, once in power, to implement these concepts and build its relations with other nations on the basis of mutual respect of these principles.

The ideological frame presented by the FIS is based on the fact that Algeria is part of the Muslim Nation. However, it takes into consideration the political culture of the Algerian society as a whole, for every Muslim country has its own specific problems that are to be solved internally. It is argued that FIS does not intend and will not attempt to build a theocratic system<sup>16</sup>.

The political programme of FIS is found in many sources. One version is published in the book the *Islamic Movement in Algeria and the Crisis of Democracy*,

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<sup>15</sup> Frank, *n. l.*, p.41.

<sup>16</sup> *Socio-Economic and Cultural Programme of FIS*, at [www.fis.org](http://www.fis.org).

written by Ghanim in 1992<sup>17</sup>. It had appeared as a form of pamphlet- *the Islamic Revolution in Algeria in 1991*. Besides, Gamal al Banna published a letter-an abbreviated version 'A letter to those who call to Islam'<sup>18</sup>. al Banna's version excludes those parts, which discuss the role of the army and foreign affairs. All three texts were published in Egypt. The actual text of the charter is given in its original version in all three editions. Besides FIS programme, Ghanim's work contains the Programme of Algerian Hamas and some of the official proclamations and statements presented by different Islamic movements in Algeria<sup>19</sup>. The political programme of FIS is popularly called 'Revealed Word'. Quran and Sunnah are the text content of the political charter. *Shariah* (Islamic Law) is the foundation/core of the programme. The political ideology of the movement is based on the sources of Islam. The political programme of the FIS aims at institutionalizing a stable governing system, which has to be representative of the plural Algerian society. The means to achieve this is through political pluralism, which fully guarantees, implements, and preserves minority rights. The FIS adheres to the election in principle, multiparty system, and the change of power.

The leader of the Algerian Islamic Movement, the late Sheikh Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis, stated in a paper titled "Basis of Governship in Islam" in January 1938, "No one has the right to manage the affairs of the people without their consent. It is incumbent on the people to delegate power or to take it away. He also said in the same paper that the people would not be governed except by the Law that they chose and knew the benefits for themselves. Therefore they obey the Law because it is

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<sup>17</sup> Ghanim, *The Islamic Revolution in Algeria-1991*, cited in David Westerlund (ed.). *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics*, (London, 1996), p.142.

<sup>18</sup> Leif Stenborg, "The Revealed Word and the struggle for Authority", in Westerlund, n.17, p.142.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

their own Law, not because any other authority does impose it on them, be it of an individual or of a group. He continued by promoting multiparty system: “The people reserve the right to discuss their matters with those in position and hold them accountable for their actions and make sure they follow the choice of the society, not their own”<sup>20</sup>.

The introduction of the charter emphasizes the significance of the Quran and the Prophetic tradition. In the second passage of the political programme Algerian people and their history is described. Here, the charter explains the programme particularly for Algerian people. Economic policy, agriculture, commerce, industry and financial situation are the subject matters in the next paragraph of the programme. The following paragraph deals with their ideas on social political and civil rights. The subject matter of the next paragraph is education – how to finance education, how to train teachers etc. Domestic and foreign policies are outlined in the following paragraphs. The features of reformation of Algerian society in the girdle of ‘Islamic *Shariah* and the complete social reformation’ (*islahal-ijstimai ash-shamil*) are some other topics of discussion<sup>21</sup>. Programme for health, politics and culture are discussed in the following paragraphs. The closing paragraph of the programme is dealing with army and foreign affairs.

At the beginning of the Programme, there is a short paragraph establishing the principles of the political platform of FIS. The programme quotes four verses from the Quran, which emphasize the omnipotence of God and the significance of being a Muslim. The authority of the book of God and Muhammad’s guidance is emphasized. The introduction to the section on the political goals of FIS is divided

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<sup>20</sup> *Socio-Economic and Cultural Programme of FIS*, n. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Stenburg, n. 18, pp. 143-44.

into five parts. The importance of *Shariah*- just Islamic order – is substantiated by quotations from the Quran. The Quranic quotations are given extra emphasis in each and every occasion. The second part deals with the importance of acquiring knowledge and technology in creating free future Islamic Society. It shows the desire for a society free from colonialism, which shall be achieved through Islamic faith and submission to the will of God. The programme emphasizes the establishment of a political project that will work as an incentive for the political actions of the FIS<sup>22</sup>.

The part on political project says-“Truly, the FIS, with its characteristic methods, does not work in isolation from the people, but always starts from the principle of working with it in every step of the historical process. The implementations (of the methods) are fruits of its ‘endeavor’ (*Jihadhi*) and ‘struggle’ (*Jihadihi*). And this was the method of the companions of the prophet as they said. “ If you had set forth before us the we and you have dived into it, we should certainly have dived with you, and no one of the us should have stayed behind you”<sup>23</sup> – here the method –to follow actions of prophet-is clearly mentioned. The most important among this is *Jihad* -holy war- in the sense of war against unbelievers as a religious duty in accordance with the regulations for such a war set down by Islamic law. It also means the individual’s personal struggle for Islam.

The doctrinal frame of the programme suggests that the political doctrine and ideology governing Algerian society should be drawn from the sphere of Islam. Islam is described as significant for Algerian history and culture. The programme says that Islam is the most solid doctrinal girdle for the political project of Algeria

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p.144.

<sup>23</sup> Ghanim- 1992 cited in Stenburg, n.18, p.144.

that has the power to confront the crisis<sup>24</sup> and Islam is the straight path and true religion. The programme says that FIS works to make a room for popular initiatives and that it will endeavor to accomplish a free and equal society. It promises that equality shall be applied in society. The idea of consultation is stressed over and over again as a part of Islamic democracy. There are twelve paragraphs constituting the basis for the fronts work to restore the political order to health, under the title 'The Political Axis' (*fashihan-mizam as-siyasi*). This paragraph -'Political Axis' (*al-mihwar-as-siyasi*) vehemently condemns a state, which is governed by secular legislation. The beginning paragraph refers to verses from the Quran, which is the first passage of the verse 21 in the *Shura* or consultation<sup>25</sup>. The usage of sacred source in this paragraph serves to uphold the view that a situation where the state is governed by secular legislation. For them, a secular legislation (law promulgated by human being) is to associate man a companion with God- that is to worship another besides God.

The programme emphasizes an Islamic mission- to divert man from false attitudes and selfishness and direct him towards the supposed Islamic spirit of unity or an equal society<sup>26</sup>. The section (*igna*)- named Political Axis emphasizes the need of consensus among Algerian people for the implementation of the policies and programme. It underlines the importance of popular initiatives, which will endeavor to accomplish a free and equal society. To achieve this, monopoly of all- including party- is to be eliminated. FIS is said to be striving for an advancement of the collective Islamic spirit in society and condemns selfishness and favoritism. 'The Right of Election, Nomination of Candidates and Participations' (*haqq al- intikhab*

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p.144.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> see the commentaries on verse 5:53, in Yusuf Ali's translation of Quran.

*wa' l- tarshih wa Musharaka fi' l- tasyi*) discusses the election processes such as running of election campaign. Here Islam is described as the religion of freedom. It is verified with a reference to utterances made by Caliph Omar i.e., 'how can you enslave people when his mother delivered them as free?'<sup>27</sup>

The economic part of the programme criticized economic mismanagement of the regime, but failed to suggest specific alternative programmes to meet the economic crisis of the state. The economic program is based on the principle of economic growth. The diversification of the internal economic structure and of the foreign trade is the first priority of the FIS economic reform and this is suggested as the best way to deal with the foreign debt. The FIS programme says that, it would honor payments of all debts accumulated by the state of Algeria prior to the *coup d'etat* of January 11, 1992. The attraction of capital to revitalize the economy is seen as a necessary measure, since the FIS foresees the participation in the 'Global Free Economy' as a building block of any country's economy nowadays<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, the relations between countries and between institutions are to be built on a partnership basis to avoid over-exploitation and guarantee proper and sound management of human as well as material resources. The FIS, however, knows that being part of a global economy has good and bad effects on the domestic economy. Nonetheless, central command economies, FIS argues, have proved everywhere in the world that global markets are unavoidable. This is pointed out as a reason for FIS's participation in the global free economy. Economic liberalization, it is argued, has to be driven by state policies in which one will have to favor certain sectors of the economy (export-oriented sectors as example) at the expense of others.

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<sup>27</sup> Stenberg, n.18, p.148.

<sup>28</sup> *Social, Economic and Cultural Programme*, n.16.



Obviously, to implement such a policy one needs to have political stability, which cannot be achieved without political democratization.

Economic liberalism, open market and support to private sector were the important aspects of the economic orientation of the FIS. These were similar to the economic policies of the existing regime. A clear-cut demarcation has been proposed between public sector and private sector in industry<sup>29</sup>. FIS enjoyed support from private sector and different commercial groups including the groups, which engaged in parallel markets. Their support was an essential outcome of the liberal policies of the FIS on matters relating to trade, commerce and industry. The considerable financial support to the organization from this section was another important outcome of this link. The ninth paragraph of the programme calls for the re-examination of agricultural policies. According to it the support of the farmers should be secured, but the method to achieve this is not clearly expressed. Time and again the programme mentions the problems of administrative malpractices but no remedy has been suggested to tackle this.

The major reason of the mass support of FIS was its social programme. FIS strengthened its social space through various kinds of social welfare activities. The supply of food grains during the Ramadan is very important in this regard. They made good use of worst ever economic situation of the country and functioned as a parallel to government. The popular support assumed by this reflected in the elections. They opened '*Islamic Souks*' which provided consumer goods with a considerable low price. They had done a remarkable relief work during earthquake in Tripuza in 1989- FIS sponsored assistance units were often there first to aid to the victims. FIS has opened its own medical clinics and also distributed free water to

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<sup>29</sup> Frank, n. 1, p.140.

victims where the Government failed to supply. These activities gave them public acceptability though the public was suspicious about their democratic credentials.

The section on social policy refers to several verses in Quran, and it deals with the rights of subjects within the state. The FIS bases its social program on the principle that man is the main axis of the universe and he creates civilizations. The FIS aims at building a balanced society where the right to life, right to health and welfare benefits, right to education at all levels for all components of the society are guaranteed. The FIS has envisioned its program based upon the fact that the Algerian society is family oriented and that man and women will be guaranteed the same status.

The Programme clearly mentions the right to live, right to social security and rights of the subjects. It emphasizes on mutual societal solidarity and the cooperation between different classes and groups. The programme says that man's right to existence (*haqq al-wudjud*) is founded on divine respect or honoring the Lord<sup>30</sup>. The social policy of the programme is based on the principles of equality in Islam. The social programme states that man is the axis of existence due to his capacity, which is different from the capacity of the animals. *Ummah* claims to give security to its subjects and every one in society is regarded being born equal. The section titled the 'Right of the Subjects' and the 'Right to Social Security'<sup>31</sup> out lines the rights of the Algerian people in all stages of the country's progress. Hence, the possibility of establishing perfect society is linked to the degree in which its Muslim inhabitants behave in a correct Islamic manner.

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<sup>30</sup> Stenberg, n.18, p.149.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

Revealed Word makes a connection between the right of existence and the right of education. The right of education presupposes that every mother is responsible on matters of importance for the education of her children. The last part of the social policy sums up FIS's position on equality that is the movement's idea of Islamic equality. As common in the case of every fundamentalist group the programme was against the rights of women in public life. It condemned the mixing of sexes in all aspects of public life. Though it called for the payment to women for their work at home, it did not address the issue/ right of women working outside the home.

The eleventh paragraph of the programme discusses the courts of justice. It says "the reform of the judicial ranks is to take place by the return of the respect for the independence of justice and the immunity of the judge just as the Islamic *Shariah* defines it."<sup>32</sup> The quotation stresses the fact that FIS cares to enlarge public confidence in law officials and courts that is needed to strengthen position of the judicial apparatus.

The application of the sources of Islamic tradition is vehemently used to legitimize the claims of FIS. In the document, *Shariah* is the foundation of political system. It is perceived as the foremost and most comprehensive principles to the true Islamic order, because they are not subordinated to the power of God. Algerian political system, as proposed by the FIS, can name candidates for general elections but the candidate should be a fit and qualified Muslim. According to the programme FIS encourages general elections not between parties representing different ideologies but between most qualified Muslim individuals<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Ghanim, n.17, p.151.

<sup>33</sup> Steinburg, n.18, p.152.

FIS is against all kinds of innovations because it considers innovation anti-Islamic. The laws shall not be promulgated by assembly because the Islamic law already exists and it is to be applied through interpretation. FIS's technique of argumentation is traditional in terms of style and structure.

According to the FIS programme Islam is comprehended as the foundation for every action in all spheres of society, individual or collective. It is a common supposition shared by almost all Islamic Movements in the Muslim World. The concept of one God (monotheism) is intimately connected with the concept of an ideal Islamic society. The term implies the idea of a society based on the Islamic principles. Thus the movement strives to unite the Algerian *Ummah* on principles to be found in Quran and in *Sunnah*. The sources of Islamic tradition are used to legitimize the claims of FIS.

The cultural programme put forward by the FIS relies on the concept of coexistence of civilizations. It aims at the preservation of the cultural and historical traditions of the Algerian society as these (Islam and Arabism) constitute the elements of its identity. According to the FIS programme; Ideologies besides Islamism – i.e. Communism/Liberalism- would be an expression of idolatry or to associate some thing with God. These ideologies are viewed as a threat to the true Islamic order because they are not subordinated to the power of God<sup>34</sup>.

FIS programme proposes the principle of consultation (*Shura*) to do away with arbitrariness. The choice of the most qualified Muslim individual will lead Algeria away from arbitrariness. Arbitrariness here signifies the presence within a society of despotism or competing ideologies where none of them is subordinated to the will of God. The traditional meaning of consultation is a mutual, first hand

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<sup>34</sup> *Socio Economic and Cultural Programme*, n.16.

consultation between high-level religious and worldly officials.<sup>35</sup> In the FIS programme consultation means allowing the people to choose their Muslim representatives to the national assembly. Moreover, these assemblies are not capable to promulgate laws.

With regard to international relations and diplomacy, the FIS bases its approach on moderation and equity in addressing world problems. The FIS unequivocally supports all oppressed people and put the issue of human rights as a guiding principle for foreign relations. Honoring treaties with regional and international bodies and organizations concluded prior to the *coup d'etat* of January 11, 1992, and which respect the strategic and national interests of the Algerian people is seen by the FIS as a necessity, since complex geopolitical and economic ties require involvement on the world scene.

A significant aspect of the programme is that FIS considers Islam in Algeria as a domestic affair and that every Muslim country has its own specific problems that are to be solved internally. This is totally against the concept of Islamic Universalism. The FIS believes in coexistence between the West and Political Islam; Political Islam does not play the role that communism played for forty-five years.

All the statements in the programme are substantiated by quotations from Quran and it is interesting to note that sometimes it is difficult to understand the connection between the statement and the Quranic passage. Such quotations from the sacred source create an impression that the programme is just and of an Islamic nature. The correlation between the contemporary situation in Algeria and the interpretation is relevant as it deals with corruption, unemployment, administrative

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<sup>35</sup> Stenburg, n. 18, p. 145.

malpractices etc. Besides, it gives an idea that every word and letter of Quran is applicable in every context.

Even though the FIS document is concerned with individual and state morality the programme is basically a part of a political discourse. Though it is rhetorical it can be characterized as a draft constitution and a normative social order that can be applied as a political system in the state. The self-image of FIS is that movement's ideology is the only correct interpretation of the Revealed Word. The usage of the Revealed Word and of the religious symbols serves to legitimize the standpoint of the FIS and also function as a religio-political language understood by most Algerians. The fundamental aim of this was to create an impression that an Islamic state may be founded on a divinely guided political authority.

Many leaders of the FIS do not belong to *Ulama* class. One of the striking features of FIS's interpretation is the fact that it is made by layman outside the control of the traditional, top-level religious leaders<sup>36</sup>. This layman's interpretation expresses an endeavor to play a part in the decision making process and its wide spread appeal suggests that these problems of state are also the problems of the people. The Islamic jargon can be summed up as a link between the core of FIS and the periphery. Though the followers in the periphery may not be willing to establish the Islamic republic of Algeria and to accept living in accordance with FIS's interpretation of Islamic law, they are willing enough to support the movement as an alternative to the politics of present regime. The socio-economic projects like community projects, welfare activities like the distribution of food grains, clothes and money, and the neighborhoods and schools played an important role in influence the people and to ensure their support.

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<sup>36</sup> Westerlund, n.17, p.153.

The colonial theme is clearly expressed in the document and it considers Islam as an ethnic marker that is it gives Algerians their true identity. The FIS's program and interpretation of Islam are closely related to the contemporary situation as a form of theorizing Islam on the specific circumstances of the present time<sup>37</sup>. It is true that FIS's usage of the Revealed Word does not actually reveal more about the socio-economic difficulties of contemporary Algeria. Besides, it only gives a vague idea of what they would do if they gain power. The Programme very rarely addressed economic issues, and the programme does not give a concrete plan to solve the economic problems of the country. The usage of the term '*Shura*' to construct an Islamic form of democracy is stressed throughout the program, and it is an instance of giving political meaning to a Quranic word. Moreover the term is used in a weak and imprecise manner. According to this, the religious duty of an individual and the community is to work for the development of an Islamic political system. Therefore the participation in election or voting is mandatory to the citizens of Algeria. Likewise the primary obligation of the elected government is nothing but to apply *Shariah* in the society<sup>38</sup>. According to the FIS program not only religious scholars but even a layman can interfere and play a role in the application of *Shariah*.

The verses from Quran and Sunnah used in the FIS document act as symbols presenting a possible line of action for the people to meet the situation in contemporary Algeria. The sacred sources and Islamic terminology are a political language understood by the people and its interpretation also tied to social predicaments. This is the reason of high support to FIS from Algerian political

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<sup>37</sup> Stenburg, n. 18, p. 156.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p. 160.

sphere. FIS supports the principles of right to expression and the right to hold general elections, which includes nomination of candidates, the right to be accepted as a candidate in elections and participation in election campaigns. According to this, four fundamental rights of man in Islamic view are expressed such as right to choose leadership and the right to administer. According to the programme the political institutions have a role to reform Islamic Algeria and the work of reform will continue until all institutions are based on Islamic law.

*Majilis-al-Shura*, which is dominated by religious elements in the organisation, had become the power center, which surpassed the popularly elected assemblies in most of the provinces and municipalities controlled by FIS. This was the major reason of the neglect of the real socio-economic and political questions. Naturally religious leadership underestimated these issues. Besides, the intervention of *Majilis al Shura* in the administration had given a different colour to these elected bodies.

Despite repeated references to the *Shariha*, the overall tone of the programme was relatively moderate. Even then, some extremist FIS leaders like Ali Belhedj often condemned the concept of democracy un-Islamic. The elements of democracy, which are mentioned in the programme of FIS, are superficial because the fundamental political rights of man such as the right to choose the leadership and administer are expressed in an Islamic vision. For Example, it never gives freedom to form political parties on the basis of different ideologies rather than Islamism. It clearly suggests that election can be conducted only within the framework of Islam. The question of government accountability, which is mentioned time and again in the programme, is totally sceptical in this context. The programme, which suggests *Shariah* as the constitution of state, can't support an administrative system, which is



accountable to the people. Further the programme emphasizes the role of political institutions like political parties and parliament to reform and strengthen the Islamic character of the Algerian state. The ultimate aim of this reform process is proposed as to change all such institutions Islamic<sup>39</sup>.

The question of accountability of state/ruling regime is again revealed here. The accountability of the government is the most important question related to the participation of FIS in elections as a political organisation. A proper understanding of the programme and the function of the provincial governments led by FIS gives a clear idea that, the government will not be accountable to people who elected them. Since the programme of FIS overwhelmingly stresses on the implementation of *Shariah* as the constitution, it is clear that an FIS run state would be more accountable to God than the people.

The first instance of FIS coming in to power was in 1990 after the municipal and provincial elections of the country. FIS got power in majority of the Municipalities and Provinces through a democratic process<sup>40</sup>. As it is obvious from the programme, FIS failed to implement policies and programmes to tackle such problems. They totally failed to handle such problems on the ground. This is the biggest challenge faced by political organisations, which are organised under certain religious dogmas. They can highlight such issues in a peripheral manner by using certain dogmas and by exploiting the belief of the people, as long as they are out of power. Once they become the part of power structure, they can't go ahead without addressing such key issues. It is not easy to sideline or escape from the realities of running the state. This is the crisis faced by FIS when they captured power in the

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<sup>39</sup> Ghanim; Cited in Westerland, n.17, p.146.

<sup>40</sup> This aspect is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.

local bodies in Algeria. In such a situation FIS run Municipal and Provincial councils concentrated on culture, religion and morals. The running of state is more a question of tactics of governance than a question of social transformation. Moreover, unlike the understanding of FIS leadership, the victory of FIS in the election was not a victory of ideology-Islamism- of FIS but the reflection of the disappointment and popular sentiments against the authoritarian state.

In spite of getting huge public support in Algeria the programme has failed to generate a better understanding of the social, political, religious and economic situation, even among the FIS followers. The view of the leadership was contradictory on certain issues. It is true that, FIS participated in the election, won, lost and accepted victory and defeats alike. When FIS got control over many local governing bodies of the country, they couldn't implement their vision of society in those communes in a significant manner. It happened because of two reasons; (a) the political compulsions which they faced while in power. (b) Lack of administrative experience and inability to consolidate power, which is essential to challenge the strong central government.

Once it came to power FIS was forced to face certain fundamental political and economic issues like underdevelopment, radical changes in the state and society, uneven distribution of resources etc. However, they failed to address those problems and concentrated on some peripheral issues like dress code, alcohol consumption and separation of sexes in schools. The most important aspect to be noted that, when FIS came to power, the decision-making was shifted from the elected assemblies

(APC) to a local *Majilis al-Shura*, in FIS controlled Municipalities, after the 1990 election<sup>41</sup>.

The study of FIS document shows that the phrases are not primarily constructed to give the reader a concrete meaning of the text. It consists of certain words and sets of slogans- mainly pictured out from Islamic sacred sources. The document seems to address the present socio-political and economic problems and functions as a mobilizing force to create public support. But it has clearly failed in both to form a better understanding of the existing social political and economic situation and to propose an alternative.

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<sup>41</sup> Frank, n.1, p.41.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FIS, ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY: ALGERIAN EXPERIENCES**

The democratisation process started in Algeria in the aftermath of the riots of 1988. The protests, which transformed into riots, were not for democracy or Islamic republic. The issues discussed during the first phase were miserable socio-economic conditions. Moreover, political developments, followed by the riots, were the essential outcome of the socio-economic realities of post independent Algeria. The constitutional reforms and the formation of numerous political parties led to a political transition in the state.

The nature of political liberalization in Algeria was a tutelary one and the structure and function of the state was basically 'liberalized authoritarian'. A top to bottom approach was operated throughout the democratisation process in Algeria. The control of the ruling class over the government and the economic activities were the major cause of this particular situation. Besides, the process of the development of certain political institutions such as political parties, elections, parliament and other elected bodies is an integral part of any democratic development. In Algeria, such developments are controlled and regulated by the regime. As a result of these, a bottom to top approach in the democratisation process was almost impossible.

As far as the FIS and democracy are concerned, it is quite clear that there are two opposing views within FIS on democracy. This debate starts from the very concept of democracy itself. The extreme elements in FIS led by Ali Belhedj, who were strengthened especially after the fall of 1992, were fundamentally against the concept of democracy and election process. But the moderates led by Madani were

in favor of democracy and they choose election as a mode to capture power and to establish an Islamic state. But they were gradually weakened by the cancellation of elections and the recapture of power by military. It is interesting to note that the intervention of army in Algerian politics by canceling the election results-which must be considered as an extreme anti-democratic step-is projected as an attempt to protect the Algerian state from anti-democratic/Islamic fundamentalist elements. Whatever be the situation, it is very clear that the democratic experiment in Algeria moved to a state of total chaos and disorder. The tension between political Islam and secular nationalism is uncovered totally by this time.

State primacy over the society was an important aspect of post independence national secular order in Algeria. The use of force to protect the order was asserted through such instruments like army, police and other security apparatus<sup>1</sup>. This aspect of military domination in the ruling apparatus was visible since the very beginning. Leading nationalist leaders like Hajji Massali and Mohammad Boudiaf were expelled from FLN leadership by ruling elites. Ahamad Ben Bella was expelled from power in 1965 and he went into exile for a long time. Colonel Houari Boumedienne, who consolidated state power, started controlling the administration with the help of military. The nationalization policies of 1970s increased the power of state and reinforced the political authority of the ruling elite.

The new constitution of 1976 restored the Popular National Assembly. But unlike its name, the assembly was neither popular nor democratic. As per this constitution, only FLN candidates were allowed to contest in the elections. The welfare policies of the state and the land redistribution to farmers increased the level

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<sup>1</sup> Larabi Sadiki, "The Impasse of Liberalizing Arab Authoritarianism: The Cases of Algeria and Egypt", Paul J. White And William S. Logan, *Remaking the Middle East* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 65-68

of depoliticisation among the Algerians. This was further expanded through the absence of both taxation and representation (no taxation, no representation). The slogan of development and order was also used to prevent the political participation of the masses. Besides, the modernization of industry based on the policy of export promotion and import substitution caused the formation of a new class 'military technocratic bourgeoisie'. As a result of all these, the situation was stable until early 1980s.

The situation in Algeria was totally transformed since 1980s. The income of state had substantially come down due to the fall in oil price in the international market. It ultimately led to the collapse of state welfarism. The problems like increase in the foreign debt, unemployment rate, housing crises and widening gap between rich and poor increased. It in combination with inefficient and corrupt authoritarianism resulted in the politicization of the people and the de-legitimation of the ruling regime. Thus, it is understood that the popular uprising of 1988 was an essential outcome of the contradiction between increasing demands of the people and the decreasing ability of the government to satisfy such demands. When Chadli Benjedid came to power in 1980, certain economic reforms were introduced. They effected a reversal of the policies introduced by Boumedienne, aiming to tackle the deteriorating economic conditions of the state. The major policy reforms were decentralization and privatization of industries – popularly called *the islah* (reform) and *infitah* (openness) – all in economic sector<sup>2</sup>.

Greater democratisation was not a programme in the reforms of Chadli, but the ideological shift from FLN socialism to open market economy was sufficient for more popular demands for participation in government. Delegitimation of Algerian

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 68.

ruling elite, increasing political instability and social discontent were the major outcomes of this ideological shift. The decade of 1980s was a transition period in economic, political and social sphere in Algeria. It was a decade of politicization of the Algerian history, which was a reversal of 1970s. The riots of 1988 against the statues-quo resulted in the introduction of new democratic institutions. It was the first attempt in the Arab world and was the ultimate result of economic liberalization process, which started in early 1980s. However, the experiment had a natural death within three years.

The first open Islamic rebellion against Algerian state was in mid-1980s and was crushed by government decisively. The most important outcome of the 1988 riots was the transformation of Islamic movement into a mass movement. It also led to the Islamists as a social and electoral force in Algeria. The overwhelming popular rejection of the FLN run degenerated state administration demonstrated the rift between state and society. This riot broke the power of FLN, which is one of the three pillars of the regime (FLN, State, Army). Following the riots, the Islamist opposition overwhelmingly occupied the space in the Algerian politics replacing all other secular nationalist forces. The fall of FLN led to political pluralism<sup>3</sup>. After the riots, the President Chadli Benjedid conducted a referendum for the adoption of a new constitution. According to the official sources, 83.08% of the voters participated in the referendum and 92.27% supported the new constitution. The new constitution legalized the end of socialist era, installed a multi party system in

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Mortiner, "Islam and Multiparty Politics in Algeria", *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol.45, no. 4, August 1991, pp.574-75.

Algeria and removed the censorship over the press<sup>4</sup>. The introduction of many new political parties was one of the important developments of the new legislation.

The new constitution was democratic in its words and substance. Article 39 of the 1989 constitution provided the freedom of expression, association and organisation. Certain rights like right to unionize and strike (Article 53 & 54) and right to form association of a political nature (Article 40) were included in the new constitution. It was a major shift from the 1971 constitution that insisted the requirement of official permission for the establishment of any kind of public association – including mosques<sup>5</sup>. The dropping of the references to socialism and the foundation of a market economy were other important aspects of the new constitution.

Algerian state adopted a capitalistic pattern of economic development, which redefined the state – society relationship of the past, which was based on welfares and socialism. The FLN – state relationship was also redefined and the new constitution abolished the identification of state with FLN. The army was excluded from their political functions such as building of socialism and running the state administration. The senior members in the administration were asked to relieve from FLN central committee and the role of army was limited to the defense of the state. The individual rights are incorporated and public sectors were allowed to strike. These constitutional developments functioned as the base of political liberalization and the channel of democratisation process. The political liberalization and the

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<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Mahmoud, "Rise and Fall of Democratisation in the Maghreb" cited in Paul J. Magrella, *Middle East and North Africa*, (Ashgate, 1998), pp.14-16

<sup>5</sup> Mortimer, n.3, p. 577.



formal introduction of the multi-party system in Algeria gave space to opposition forces– mainly Islamic– to participate in the political process of the state<sup>6</sup>.

Dozens of new political organisations were formed. FIS got legal recognition on the basis of new constitution on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1989<sup>7</sup>. Two other Islamic parties- *- Hamas* and *Al Nahda* – were also formed with FIS. FIS was well represented among the students and educated class. Social, economic and political problems faced by the society were well articulated by Islamic parties, especially FIS. Besides, they strengthened their roots in the religious spheres of the country. As a result of this, most of the Universities, Schools and Colleges of the country were highly politicized. By 1989-90, the socio-economic situation of the country was highly suitable for a radical transformation. The ideology of FIS was against a secular nation state. They accused that the then Algerian state was an anti-Islamic state. FIS leadership, including the moderates like Madani, projected Islam as the only solution of the socio-economic problems of the Algerian society. They projected the party, as a divine expression of the popular will and proclaimed that ‘to vote against FIS is equal to voting against Islam/God’. It was certain that the party was far away from democratic commitments. Their theocratic views were against the secular traditions and democratic institutions of the state. Leaders like Ali Belhedj were always against democracy. This fundamentalist – secularist dichotomy was the root cause of military intervention in Algerian politics in 1992.

Though Chadli Benjedid restructured the political system, he himself controlled all the instruments of power. The revoking of the ban on the formation of political parties was conditional. Those parties, which were based exclusively on

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<sup>6</sup> John Ruedy (ed.), *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, (New York, 1994), pp.236-37.

<sup>7</sup> Mortimer, n.3, p. 579.

religious, regional and professional interests, were not allowed to function. Besides, each organisation had to get license from the interior ministry. The parties, which spread intolerance in the society and among different communities and promote sectarian interest, were also disqualified on the basis of the electoral law<sup>8</sup>. But, in spite of all its fundamentalist orientations, FIS was recognised and allowed to participate in the elections. It expected that FIS could be neutralized by the proliferation of other parties and the moderate influences inside the organisation. It is also to be noted that, the Prime Minister Hamarouche was highly committed to democratize the state. Under the new constitution, more than 30 other political parties got registered with FIS. They were liberal / centrist parties like Socialist Forces Front (FFS), Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Islamic parties like Islamic Movements for Democracy in Algeria and Hamas. Despite their ideological and political differences they played a major role in the democratisation process in Algeria. Minor parties like Algerian National Party (ANP), Popular Unity Party and Social Liberal Party were also participated in this process.

An extraordinary party congress of FLN was held in 1989 November at the initiative of the anti-reformist hardliners in the organisation. They criticised the compromising policies of the government with the Islamists and elected some former military Lieutenants to the party Central Committee. Anyhow, their attempts to put pressure on government to stop reforms had failed because the majority in the politburo ultimately supported the reforms. However, this was the beginning of the opposition from within to reforms, which ended with a sabotage of all democratic process with the army takeover in 1992.

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<sup>8</sup> "Test of the Law in Maghreb", *Machrek*, no.127, January – March, cited in Mortimer, n.3, p. 580.

The hardliners in the opposition movements especially the FIS started misusing the newly emerged liberal political space which endowed them with a right to strike, freedom of expression, freedom of association etc. Number of strikes was conducted in Algeria even for simple reasons. Most of these strikes failed to address the fundamental economic and political issues in the state. i.e., the major demands were neither the remedies to economic maladies nor the demand for more political participation/democratisation. Instead, the opposition raised the demands such as closure of brothels, the ban on alcohol, and the abolition of the official status of Berber language in education. These were comparatively minor issues, which had nothing to do with the real problems, but this sidelined the major issues. The expansion of fundamentalist sentiments was more visible during the strike because one of the major demands was to redefine the role of women in Islam according to their interpretation of the traditions of Islam. The major concern of this group was the ban of western dressing of women. As a result of all these developments, the democratisation/liberalization process was diverted from its real objectives. The reformists faced challenges, both in the government and opposition. The ruling regime was surrounded by the secularist hardliners in FLN and orthodox Islamists in the opposition.

### **Local Elections of 1990 and Its Impact on Algerian Democratic Process**

The advent of democratisation came to Algeria with a flourish in June 1990. On the basis of the new constitution, a provincial election was held. This was the first multiparty election in the history of independent Algeria. The climate was suitable for free debates and discussions but most of the time these were diverted. Though 15 political parties demanded the postponement of elections, the government decided to

go along with its previous plan to conduct elections<sup>9</sup>. Secular parties like FFS and RCD boycotted the election. The election resulted in the drastic defeat of FLN. In the absence of other major opposition parties in the election, FIS could easily exploit and mobilize the anti-FLN sentiments of the people. FIS got 54.25% of the votes and majority in 55% of the Local Councils, i.e., 853 Communes of the total 1540<sup>10</sup>. Besides, FIS got 65% of the Provincial Councils i.e., in 32 Provinces out of 48. FLN got only 28% of the votes. It is important to note that around 30 to 40% of the eligible voters – mostly secular – stayed away from election due to the call for boycott of FFS and RCD. This ultimately helped the FIS who successfully mobilized their supporters.

The initiatives of the government to conduct elections ended in a logical conclusion by the success of democratic electoral process with multiparty participation in the first time in the history of Arab world. As a result of this, the opposition FIS replaced FLN as the dominant political party of Algeria. Though the electoral process was a successful experiment, the subsequent events were not helpful for a wider democratisation process. The failure of reforms and the increasing use of religion in politics were the immediate consequences of the election. The election didn't strengthen the democratic values in Algerian politics because a prominent group in FIS – Ali Belhedj and his supporters – declared that democracy is not an Islamic concept and demanded the introduction of *Shariah* as the constitution of the state<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Mortimer, n.3, pp. 584-85.

<sup>10</sup> Mohammad Mohamud in Paul J Magralla, n.4.

<sup>11</sup> Mortimer, n.3, p.586.

FIS supporters started the violation of state laws and they openly challenged the government by frequently conducting demonstrations and demanding the dissolution of National Peoples Assembly (NPA) and the formation of a full-fledged Islamic state. The two newly elected Town Councils closed movie theaters and even secular education institutions<sup>12</sup>. The girl students and the women in western dresses were harassed in streets by certain anti-social elements within FIS<sup>13</sup>. Though Abbassi Madani tried to project the moderate face of FIS, he simply failed because most of the Municipal Councils under FIS were controlled by fundamentalist elements. It is clear that the same beneficiaries of the democratisation process have become a threat to the continuation of democracy in Algeria. This development gradually led to the intervention of army – the most undemocratic element- into Algerian political scenario within a short span of time.

#### **The Parliament Elections of 1991 and the Fall of Democratic Process in Algeria**

Confident from their victory in the provincial elections, FIS demanded immediate election to the parliament. In order to put pressure over the government, FIS declared an indefinite general strike on 25<sup>th</sup> may 1991, which lasted till June 7 with numerous incidents of violence and violation of laws. Madani demanded the resignation of Chadli Benjedid for the failure of the government in controlling the law and order situation. In this context, government declared emergency in the country and cancelled the proposed parliamentary elections. FIS suffered considerable repression and many of their leaders were imprisoned. As a man who is highly committed to democratisation, Chadli was not ready to go back from the parliamentary election, though he was highly pressurized to do so both from the

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

military and hardliners in FLN. On the other hand, FIS tried hard to complicate the situation by the call for a holy war (*jihad*) against the state and a series of intentional provocations to the security forces<sup>14</sup>.

The much-awaited and twice-postponed parliamentary elections were proposed to conduct in December 1991. As promised by the President, the first round of the parliamentary election was held on 26 December 1991. When Islamist parties formed an unofficial alliance, the secular parties failed to form an anti-Islamic coalition. Besides, differences within FIS were kept away for the time being to ensure the victory in the elections. Further, FIS demonstrated an Islamic rule in Provincial and Municipal level and tried to capitalize the religious-nationalist sentiments of the people. At the same time, as a contrary to this known position, it campaigned for extreme free market policies and the abandon of subsidies and state monopoly over industries.

The 'Group of Eight' – an electoral group formed by RCD, MDA, and Algerian Movement for Justice and Development and certain other small parties- was the third actor in the parliamentary elections. They, with FIS, opposed the government's attempt to do irregularities in election by gerrymandering and using military influence. They demanded presidential election along with parliamentary elections.

The election was held in a highly tense situation of violent clashes and strikes. In the elections, FIS got 47.26% of the votes and 188 of total 340 seats where elections were held. FLN got 23.38% votes and the allies got 7.4% votes<sup>15</sup>. The situation was that if the second round of elections were to be conducted FIS

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<sup>14</sup> Mortimer, n.3, p.587.

<sup>15</sup> Paul J. Magrella , *Middle East and North Africa*, (Ash Gate, 1999), pp.12-14.

would come to power with a huge majority in the parliament (the projected seats of FIS was 323 out of 436). In such a complicated situation, the role of army had become very critical. Army demanded the removal of Prime Minister Hamarouche who was responsible for the new electoral law, which caused the Islamist victory. Army cancelled the presidential elections and started strong actions against civil disobedience. Ahammad Ghozali was appointed as the new Prime Minister and he declared free and clean elections and the revision of controversial redistricting bill. An interim government was formed with moderate members of FLN including two women as the ministers. On the other side, Islamists turned against the army. They even threatened *Jihad* against army<sup>16</sup>. The political climate in Algeria remained tense. Islamists ruled out any possibility of sharing power with other parties. This position of Islamists increased the suspicion among the Algerians that they were going to form an Islamic state.

### **Intervention of the Army**

The three years of democratic experiment in Algeria ended with the direct intervention of army on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1992. President Chadli was forced to resign. The election was cancelled, National Assembly was dissolved and many FIS leaders were arrested and imprisoned. High Council of State (HCS) was formed to run the administration. Mohammad Boudiaf, a war veteran, was appointed as the chairman of the HCS and Ali Kafi (the President of War Veteran Association) and Major General Nezzar (Minister of Defense) were appointed as members. However the real power remained in the hands of the army.

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<sup>16</sup> Mortimer, n.3, p. 590.

Army took control of Newspapers and Mosques. FIS-controlled Provincial Councils were dissolved and the organisation was formally outlawed. A new council – *Council Consultatif Nationale* (CCN) - was formed to function as parliament. The new ruling regime initiated economic reforms and strong actions were taken against the Islamists. HCS ordered the FIS to dissolve the party and to surrender its properties including headquarters. These attempts amounted to a total reversal of all democratic process in Algeria initiated in the early years of 1990. The expansion of state authority and power were further stressed<sup>17</sup>. The radical elements in the FIS turned in favor of armed revolution.

The chairman of the CCN - Mohammad Boudiaf tried to reconstitute the democratic government and multiparty political system in the state against the interests of the military. He promised constitutional review and the dissolution of FLN. But on the other side Islamists threatened to forge a civil war and started terrorist activities. Boudiaf became a victim of army's wrath because of his attempts to reconstruct democracy. He was assassinated at the hands of some extreme elements in military in June 1992. Thus, the political power in Algeria was totally moved into the hands of military. FIS stated that the coup was the only way of repressive military regime to block them from establishing a just, rightful and true Islamic state<sup>18</sup>. Army played two main roles in the Algerian political system after the developments in 1992. It functioned as if it was the only agency, which can guarantee national security and protect democracy and secularism in Algeria. Army started direct actions against the extreme Islamist elements. It led to a street fight between army and Islamists. It is also important to note that the radical elements in

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<sup>17</sup> Ruedy, n. 6, p.230.

<sup>18</sup> Chouciri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, (London, 1990), p. 74.



Islamist groups also tried to sabotage elections by encouraging violence because they feared that an election victory might strengthen the support base of the moderates<sup>19</sup>.

In the Algerian context, democratisation can be achieved through the integration of moderate Islamic viewpoints with a parliamentary system. Clearly, Islamist victory was mainly due to the popular opposition to the FLN rather than support for the introduction of *Shariah* or the radical elements. The rapid transition in Algeria from monolithic to pluralistic politics was an uncontrolled, unplanned, untimely one. This affected the stability of the state. Though that was an untimely one, the process of democratisation was unavoidable in the political system of Algeria.

The victory of FIS revealed the potency of Islam as a mobilizing force and the possibilities of religion as a weapon to capture power by using the democratic space. The radical elements, both in FIS and FLN created an unstable socio-economic environment, which was a sufficient reason for the intervention of army. The warnings of President and Defense Minister that 'the army was prepared to intervene in general elections if national unity was threatened by organised excesses' was a clear sign of army intervention which was neglected by both FIS and other radicals<sup>20</sup>. Algeria was about to become the first multiparty democratic polity in the Arab world. The liberal policies of the state and the elections in 1990 and 1991 would have led the state from a single party authoritarian polity to a liberal multiparty democratic one.

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<sup>19</sup> Mortimer, n.3, pp. 592-93.

<sup>20</sup> Rucdy, n .6, p. 237.

One of the striking elements of Algeria's passage through democracy was that the traditionalist groups functioned in the forefront of democratic representation, organisation, mobilization and the participation. They opted democracy both at the procedural and functional levels at that point of time. The end of the democratic experiment resulted in the reemergence of authoritarian regime and the re-imposition of its hegemony over state and society<sup>21</sup>. After the coup of 1992 the Algerian military acted only to maintain its hold on political power. It functioned as an order against Islamism. There is no sincere attempt to reestablish democracy on the part of military through means such as negotiation and dialogue with the opposition. Some extreme radical groups were formed in Algeria after the army takeover of power. Among those, GIA (Groupe Islamique Army), MIA (Movement Islamique D' Algeria) and AIS (Armee Islamique du Salute) were more militant in their ideology and operation. Military reorganized the security forces to combat Islamist violence. These extremist elements together with army changed the discourse on democratic transition in the state to a military power-game.

There were several elections held in Algeria after the 1992 experiment. But FIS was banned from participating in these elections. In the 1995 election, President Zeroual won another term in office. An election was held to the National Popular Assembly in 1997. 39 parties contested for 380 seats and 65.5% polling was recorded. FLN formed a government together with RND (*Ressemblement National Democratic*) and MSP (*Movement Dela Societe Pour la Paix*). Military was strongly against any negotiation with FIS, they blocked Zeroual from a talk with FIS. A considerable development during this period was the decision of AIS (the military

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 221.

wing of FIS) to declare ceasefire and join the security forces against extreme fundamentalist elements of GIA

### **Islam and Democracy: The Discourse in Algeria**

The conflict between Islamists and Algerian regime is an important issue in the ongoing debate about Islam and democracy. Generally, democracy is considered as a secular concept in which no religion will get any special consideration. Religious freedom is ensured to all people. However, there is no such clear-cut model of democracy. Different traditions have given different interpretations to democracy. Even within FIS, there are controversial positions on democracy and elections. As far as Algeria is concerned, the popular sentiment in the state was in favor of democracy, which gives preference to parliamentary system and secularism. People demanded more channels of political expression and representative institutions.

The compatibility of Islam and democracy is to be understood on the basis of various interpretations. It is to be remembered that no ideology is rigid and there is enough scope to interpret and reinterpret an ideology. For example, Christianity, which was considered as the base of western democratic development, had supported absolutism or largely used to get legitimacy to authoritarianism at one point of time. As far as Islam is concerned, it supported or it is used to legitimize dictatorship, monarchy, absolutism and even democracy in various countries in different times<sup>22</sup>. However, Islam shows a general disregard to western model of democracy mainly due to the colonial experiences. It cannot be considered as a total rejection of the concept, democracy.

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<sup>22</sup> John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatory "Democratisation and Islam" *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol.35, no.4, Summer 1991, p. 434.

Fazlur Rahman, a modern Islamic scholar, interpreted the concept of democracy in Islam in a modern context. According to him, *Shura* (consultations) *ijma* (consensus) *ijtihad* (independent judgment) and *qiyas* (analogical judgment) are the key concepts of democracy in Islam. The concept of *Shura* is considered as the center of any discourse on democracy in Islam. It is a consultative body of scholars who engaged in law making. The groups, which support democracy, argue that Islam is inherently democratic as it is against autocracy. The concept of *ijma* or consensus is the collective judgment of the *Ulama*. According to this interpretation, there is freedom of choice in Islamic society. Society is the final authority to take decision on the proposal submitted to them. *Ijtihad* or independent reasoning ensures the freedom of believers to interpret Islam<sup>23</sup>. The authority of religion in Islamic society is founded on the freedom of *ijtihad*, which provides a large space for innovation and creativity<sup>24</sup>. An *ijtihad* that is accepted by the majority is usually adopted by *Ulama*. This challenged the monopoly of the clerics in the interpretation of the Holy Law. The concept of *qiyas* gives a Muslim the right to interpret Holy Law on the basis of rationalism. For Fazlur Rahman, equality, private property and the right to criticise the unjust rulers are the inherent rights of a believer, which is ensured by Quran.

The concept of *bay'ah* is another important character of Islamic democracy, which emphasizes the rights of the people to control the discretionary powers of the ruler, and it proposes free elections to ensure the legitimacy of the regime. Muhammad Azad – another modern Islamic thinker – argues in favor of Legislative Assemblies with direct or indirect representation of the people. This interpretation

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<sup>23</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, cited in, Monochar Dorraj, "Islam, Governance and Democracy", in John Magrella, n.4, pp. 17-19.

<sup>24</sup> Rashid Al Ghannushi, "Secularism in the Arab Maghreb", cited in Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (2000), p. 97.

emphasizes the equality of men and women in the political process. He proposes general elections to *Majilis* with universal adult suffrage<sup>25</sup>. On the other side, it is true that there are many other Islamic scholars like Shykh Fadallah Nuri of Iran and Saiyyd Qutb of Egypt, who strongly objected this modernist Islamic views on democracy and they rejected the concept of equality and popular sovereignty. In their interpretation, such concepts are anti-Islamic because God is the only sovereign and there can't be equality between believers and non-believers. This orthodox fundamentalist interpretation is upholding by militant elements throughout the Islamic world, including Algeria.

The ideological framework of FIS is highly influenced by various modern interpretations of democracy in Islam. It gives a clear picture of the democratic setup, which could be provided by the Islamists. An Algerian Islamic scholar Malik Bennabi pointed out the two basic objectives of Islamic faith. (a) It liberates man from servitude. In Islam man is free and unenslavable (b) Islam prohibits a believer from enslaving others. In his interpretation, *jihad* is the constant endeavor to struggle against all forces of political and economic tyranny. Oppression could never be given a chance to establish in the Islamic society.

Certain political and social features of Islamic societies are highlighted as the reasons of anti-democratic tendencies of Islam such as low level of development, entrenched tradition of state control, absence of the tradition of private property and lack of separation between state and law and politics and religion<sup>26</sup>. But, it is clear that these aspects are common in the Third World countries, whether that is Islamic or not. Prof. Muhammad Talibi, a leading contemporary modernist Islamic thinker

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<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Azad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, (Gibraltar, 1980), p.45.

<sup>26</sup> Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, (London, 1996), p. 116.

was totally against all attempts to associate the concept of *Shura* with democracy<sup>27</sup>. He argues that, *Shura* is from a time and place which had no conception of democracy. Neither Islam nor western civilization had this conception of democracy before the modern age. For Talibi, democracy means the voice of the many (the people). Moreover it is associated with the notions of universal human rights, freedom of expression, religious pluralism and equality before the law. *shura* is not similar to this but contains some elements of true democracy in it particularly the concern for the subjects and their views. This is an integral part of the idea of consultation<sup>28</sup>. Talibi finds Quran's basic Islamic values as components of democracy. It constitutes a sort of bridge between Islam and modern democracy. According to him, democracy never existed in the Islamic world in the modern sense. The political and religious are two separate conceptual categories and not related to each other.

According to Bernard Lewis, Turkey is the only democratic country in the Islamic world.<sup>29</sup> The Turkish constitution of 1982 emphasizes that the secular character of the state cannot be repealed under any circumstances. Besides this, it authorizes the military to function as the protector of secularism. The major difference between Algeria and Turkey is that Islam and democracy in Turkey is an interactive one. In Turkey, Islam has been integrated to democratic political system<sup>30</sup>, even the groups which have religious orientation have been included into the state structure. While Turkey's ruling regime succeeded to incorporate them,

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<sup>27</sup> Ronald L Nettle, "*Islam, Politics and Democracy: Mohammed Talibi and Islamic Modernism*", cited in David Mouqudad and Ronald L. Nettle (eds.) *Religion and Democracy*, (London, 2000), p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Bernard Lewis, "*Islam and democracy*", *Atlantic* 271, February, 1993, pp. 89-93.

<sup>30</sup> Metin Hepar, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Towards a Reconciliation" *Middle East Journal* (Washington), vol. 51, no.1, p.33.

Algerian state failed miserably to absorb religiously oriented groups into the state. Moreover, the absence of different stages of a democratic political development is important in the case of Algeria.

In Turkey, the secularization, democratisation and the integration of Islamists into the system have been achieved in three different stages, the introduction of democracy (First stage, 1923–40), establishment of democracy (Second stage by next five years -1940 – 45) and the consolidation of democracy (Final stage) after 1945. But in Algeria, the democracy was not the result of the process of a political development. Unlike Turkey, the Islamists, in Algeria took an anti state and anti regime policy. When only Turkish nationalism and Turkish identity got prominence in Turkey, Islamic identity got equal importance in Algeria with Algerian nationalist identity. The rapid introduction of democracy within a short span of time without sufficient political institutions and the absence of a political culture, which is suitable to democratic process, were the major reasons for the reversal of the democratisation process in Algeria. In Algeria, the call for democracy has not been hand in hand with a set of certain institutions, which can ensure peaceful political change in response to evolving needs<sup>31</sup>.

In Algeria, Ali Belhedj-a preacher turned leader of FIS- was the major proponent of militant Islam. Though he did not support the concept of democracy, he justified his group's participation in the election. He took such a strange position because he believed that the election can be used to affirm the role of Islam in public

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<sup>31</sup> John Howe, "The Crisis of Algerian Nationalism and the Rise of Islamic Integralism", *New Left Review* (London), 1992, p. 97.

life and to combat injustice. He objected the concept of majority rule because in his opinion, the issues of right and justice cannot be quantified<sup>32</sup>.

The discussion about democracy and Islam constitute the key discourse in the Algerian political system. Islam denies the separation of state from religion. It recognizes the politicized faith. It emphasizes the totality of religion in the socio-economic life of the Algerians. For Islamists', the concept of democracy is nothing else but the concept of equality in Islam. The religion is the source of individual and collective identities. The tradition started by Prophet Muhammad not to propose the successor is pointed out as an important aspect of democratic tradition of Islam.

The weakening of traditional power structure and more demands for political participation were important aspects of the political scenario in the Arab world in the last decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Arab world was unique in certain ways such as the absence of certain socio-economic conditions, which are necessary for the promotion of democratic institutions. The discourse on liberalization and democratisation in the Arab world was mainly between the new elites and Islamist groups. The 1990s witnessed the revival of Islamic fundamentalism with the increasing participation of Islamists in the elections and democratic process. It has raised some fundamental questions on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. It is important because of the western presupposition that Islam and democracy are incompatible. A new trend of secular nationalist radicalism, which kept away from militancy, was formed on the basis of the argument that any form of parliamentary democracy is not westernization<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Bellhedj, *Al Munqudh* (The Journal of FIS), no. 24, August 1990 cited in Esposito and Piscatory, n.22, p. 436.

<sup>33</sup> Esposito and Piscatory, n.22, p. 428.



The moderates in Islamist groups in countries like Algeria attempted to come in terms with democracy. Islamist organisations like FIS understood the utility of working within the political system. Many Islamist groups in Egypt, Sudan and Pakistan followed the same path. They participated in the elections, got elected and even joined the Cabinet. Sometimes they cooperated with the secularists. The multiparty system and the representative elections were mainly by the result of the demand of Islamic parties<sup>34</sup>.

According to the constitution of Algeria, the state is not strictly secular, because there is no separation between religion and state. The secular elites control both state and religious institutions including the appointment of Imams in the official Mosques<sup>35</sup>. The ruling elite used Islam to maintain their authority. As a result, Islam remained at the centre of state discourse. People came to realize that the gap between Islamic rhetoric and reality. State has taken over all institutions of civil society such as courts, press, trade unions, economic institutions, religious institutions and political parties.

The democracy, which was installed in Algeria by secular elites, was only a decorative one and no actual power sharing mechanism has been promoted.<sup>36</sup> For the ruling elites, modernity is nothing but radical secularization and the separation of religion from all aspects of public life. When the democratic choice of Algerian people went against the secular elites, the undemocratic measures became acceptable to ruling establishment.

During the last decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, multi-party elections and constitutional law became a part of Islamic thinking. But the major question about

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p. 431.

<sup>35</sup> Ghannouchi, n.24, p. 97.

<sup>36</sup> Esposito and Piscatory, n.22, p.102.

the commitment of Islamists – including FIS – to democracy remained unanswered. The suspicion, whether Islamic movements are willing to tolerate diversity remained. Most of the people who were committed to democracy and secularism forced to believe that the participation of FIS in elections is merely a tactic to capture power. This suspicion is strengthened by the words and deeds of FIS and it joined with certain other factors finally prevented a smooth political transition in Algeria from single party/military authoritarianism to democracy.

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

The growth of Islamic movements in Algeria is closely connected with the reform in Islam and the resistance against French colonialism. It was the result of a historic process, which started since the spread of Islam to North Africa and the establishment of it as the religion of various tribal groups. It has got an organisation structure during the period of colonial invasion and it strengthened simultaneously with the expansion of colonialism. As we have seen, the first manifestation of Islamic resistance was the movement of Abd al Qadir. It is true that there were various socio-economic and political reasons behind the protest of Abd al Qadir. But the major unifying force was the cultural/religious identity based on Islam. The religious traditions, which predominated in the consciousness of the people, resulted in the dominance of it in the anti-colonial movement and this functioned as the main ideological base of such a resistance. Thus, Islamic ideals, symbols, and institutions offered powerful instruments of inspiration and mobilization for those who challenged the French domination in Algeria.

The various reformist movements in Islam were a major imperative behind the process of anti-colonial resistance. *Salafism* was the major influential force and the theoretical foundation of all Islamic movements in Algeria. Though it was a religious reformist movement which formed against maraboutism, it finally created a religious nationalist consciousness among the Algerian Muslims. Gradually it developed as a national movement, which challenged the state based on French colonial structure.

Islam functions as a mobilization force since the very beginning of the colonial occupation. The movement formed by Abd al Qadir continued for fifty years by various other groups. As we see, the spirit of Islam functioned in Algeria in different ways during different phases of the national movement. The major drawback was that the Islamic modernism remained at theoretical level and it had no relevance in terms of resolving the immediate problems of internal dysfunctions and external interferences. It failed to create significant political impact at the first stage.

The influence of colonialism over Islamic resurgence is a very critical one. The socio-economic impacts of colonialism were the major factors, which provided a space to Islamic nationalism in Algeria. The colonial policies mainly targeted religion and this considerably weakened and undermined the legitimacy of traditional cultural institutions. In the part of colonial policy, Mosques and Madrassas were closed, religious properties were confiscated and other religious institutions were taken over. Besides, the right to individual interpretation of the Islamic texts, proposed by the new generation reformists like Muhammad Abdhu and Jamaluddin Afghani was a revolutionary step towards nationalism and religion. In totality, the Islamic reformism in Algeria in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was more nationalistic in its orientation.

The writings of Hassan al Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Abdul Mawdudi influenced the Algerian Islamic movement to a large extent. Anti-western slogans of Sayyid Qutb were very important in the Algerian context. The Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama formed by Abdul Hamid Ben Badis was a turning point in the Algerian colonial history. This can be considered as the major political development against French colonialism. They presented Islam as the national ideology of the Algerian people. The movement joined with other nationalist

elements that were fighting against French colonialism. It increased the political activism in the name of Islam, which emerged as a major trend during the later phases of anti-colonial struggle.

The importance of religion in the postcolonial Algeria is closely linked with its legacy in the struggle for independence. This struggle strengthened Islamic consciousness among the Algeria Muslims and this factor came in with a nationalist face by the declaration of the war of independence in 1954. Even the colonial regime recognized the Islamic identity of Algerians by providing French citizenship 'within the Muslim law and customs'. As a result of such developments, the struggle against colonialism was becoming a struggle of Algerian Muslims against French Christians to a certain extent.

The advocates of national culture considered Algerian revolution primarily a defense of the faith of the people. The achievement of political, administrative, economic and military power by Algerians created a new situation and from the very beginning religious elements started demanding total Arabisation in school education and public services. The major objective of the formation of FLN (1954) and the war of independence (1954-62) were the creation of an independent Algerian state within the framework of Islamic principles. The ruling regime neglected the Islamic factors and went away from the commitments of the declaration of independence. The ruling elite in Algeria propagated a secularist vision of state which was more French than Algerian in its substance. Islam became a part of state bureaucracy and was used to justify state socialism.

The state which was formed by FLN was a democratic and popular Algerian republic, certainly not an Islamic state. This aspect together with a state monopolization of religious institutions created a dissent among the clergy and the

believers. When the dissent strengthened, the ruling regime changed its strategies and implemented certain new policies to appease the religious opposition. The Arabisation of education was one of the major demands of the Islamic elements in the early years of independence were ratified by the state. The official declaration of Friday as the holyday and the establishment of official radio stations to Islamic preaching were the two major developments. It is further strengthened by the introduction of Algerian family code in 1984. Though Islam was put under strict state control, such policies of state popularized the discourse based on Islam and strengthened the influence of Islam in Algerian society.

Islamic movements used both Mosques and the streets to challenge the authority of the regime, which they viewed as illegitimate. The growing dissatisfaction of the people and their consolidation under Islamic ideological framework gradually led to the increase of the influence of Islamic movements in Algeria. Till 1980, the Islamists were working under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and they were not in a position to challenge the regime. When the nationalist trend diminished over the time in Algeria, the Islamic influence increased. The Islam was becoming the guiding principle of vast majority in the society due to the failure of state secularization. It seems that the secular nationalist experiment in Algeria was an imitation of western model, which was not suitable to a state like Algeria.

The cultural and the moral opposition of the Islamists were translated into a growing political context, in 1980s. It was the continuation of the changing nature of Islamism after the War of Independence. If the modernization of religion played an important role in the anti-colonial resistance during the colonial period, it has been becoming increasingly fundamentalist and violent in the post-colonial period. In spite of the westernization and secularization of politics and society and the rapid

spread of industrialization and Arabisation, there was certainly enough tradition left to feed a potential religious reorganization. This specific aspect of post-colonial Algeria together with the decline of state socialism and the failure of economy created a situation of an open anti-state protest.

As far as secularism and Islamism are concerned, in the general political discourse in North Africa, secularism is associated with the colonialism, neo-colonialism and the western worldview. On the other hand, Islam is considered as an indigenous reaction to it. The impact of this is that the political and economic failure of state resulted in the natural growth of Islamism because secularism is identified with state. Because of this, in the later stage-especially in 1990s, the struggle gained a mixed character of the state's attempt to protect secularism on one hand and the opposition's attempt to form an Islamic state on the other. The growth of Islamism in Algeria should be understood in the context of socio-economic developments in the post-colonial state. Even then, it is true that there are some cultural factors behind the formation of Islamic movements.

As we have seen the political crisis developed in Algeria in late 1980s was a crisis closely connected with the economic crisis in a rentier state. Since state is the only organisation, which involves in economic activities, the crisis make a reflection to the state and it will forcefully bring a structural and institutional change. In the case of Algeria, the dissent which has been always there and when it got an opportunity to attack the state, the state was forced to implement certain fundamental institutional changes. When state faced an economic crisis, it was forced to withdraw from its welfare policies, which were the major source of legitimacy.

The ever-deteriorating economic conditions of the state led to a major restructure in the economy. The new reforms reduced the role of state in economy and individuals got more opportunities to interfere in the economic activities. Besides, the political reforms opened the public space for opposition parties. But, the people who moved most vigorously to occupy the new political opportunities were militant Islamist groups. They succeeded to occupy the new liberal space and used that space to strengthen their radical militant ideology. It was very clear that their demands had nothing to do with the real problems of the state.

The formation FIS was one of the major impacts of political liberalization in Algeria. The organisation could consolidate the Islamic sentiments, which had existed there for decades. As a result of this, the organisation emerged as the dominant political group in Algeria within a short span of time. The election results of 1990s underlined this fact. FIS was an amalgam of different Islamist groups from moderates to extreme fundamentalists. There was crucial difference among them on different issues. But the positive aspect of this organisation was that, due to the representation of various ideological currents in FIS, it has got an identity of the most successful opposition/popular movement against regime.

The political programme of FIS emphasizes the significance of Quran and prophetic traditions. The programme, which is popularly known as 'Revealed Word', describes the socio-economic and cultural agenda of FIS. The programme considers *Shariah* as the foundation and uses Islamic terminology. The major drawback of the programme is that it didn't suggest a clear-cut solution to the real problems of the state. Besides, it concentrates on cultural and religious aspects that are more important in the formation of an Islamic state. Contradictory to this, the



economic programme of FIS is more close to a market economy, which encourages the private sector and global participation in economic activities.

It is very clear that there is an inherent contradiction between the FIS programme and the objective of the organisation. The programme was more or less a moderate one in its substance. The objective is proposed as the formation of an Islamic State based on *Shariah* and the statements in the programmes are substantiated by quotations from Quran. Most of the time, such quotations were used in out of context.

It is true that FIS usage of the 'Revealed Word' does not actually reveal more about the socio-economic difficulties of contemporary Algeria. The fundamental question of the accountability of State is the most important issue related to the participation of FIS in elections. The elements of democracy, which are mentioned in the programme of FIS, are superficial because the fundamental political rights of the man such as the right to choose the leadership and administer are expressed in an Islamic vision. It never gives freedom to form political parties on the basis of different ideologies and suggest that election can be conducted only within the framework of Islam. Further a proper understanding of the programme and the function of provincial governments led by FIS give a clear idea that the government will not be accountable to the people who elected them.

One prominent group within FIS proposed some democratic measures to form an Islamic state but the general position regarding this was that the *Shariah* should be considered as the law of the land. If we take this in totality, it is clear that the FIS was not committed to democracy as such and what they have done was only a lip service. The authoritarian regime is the other major actor in the democratization process. This process started in Algeria during the late 1980s by the introduction of a

new constitution as a part of political liberalization. Many elections were conducted in Algeria during early 1990s and both Islamists and secular parties participated in the election. The results were generally in favor of opposition led by FIS.

The activities of FIS in their provinces were a threat to democratisation process because they used the space to strengthen and expand their Islamist ideology, which was anti-secular in its operation. This is the situation which army interfered into politics as a protector of secular and democratic character of the state. But army functioned as the most undemocratic element since the time of independence by interfering in political activities.

In nutshell, the successive governments in Algeria have functioned as the principal instigator of violence for last ten years. There has never been a genuine attempt on their part to establish democracy. Military acted only to maintain its hold on political power, and legitimize its role as the protector of secularism, democracy and the order against Islamism. Now, protection of existing power configuration is the only aim of the government. The moderate elements in the FIS were sidelined by the capture of power by the military. The extremist elements who started open fight against the state also delegitimise the process of democracy and undermined the possibilities of the return of democratic process in Algeria. Violation of civil rights, lack of proper judicial set up and ever increasing human rights violations are the order of the day in Algeria.

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